

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK'S HUNDRED BOOKS

49

THE
HISTORY OF KING ARTHUR

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La Mort d'Artbure

THE HISTORY OF KING ARTHUR

AND OF THE
KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE

COMPILED BY
SIR THOMAS MALORY, KNT.

EDITED FROM THE TEXT OF THE EDITION OF 1634

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

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INTRODUCTION.

THE origin of the cycle of romances, which have for their subject the adventures of king Arthur and his knights, and which were during many ages so popular throughout nearly all the countries of Europe, appears to be involved in impenetrable mystery, and I will not attempt to discuss it on the present occasion. We first become acquainted with the story which forms the groundwork of them in the pretended History of the Britons, published in the year 1147, by Geoffrey of Monmouth, who acknowledges that his materials came from Britany, which country, therefore, we may perhaps safely regard as the cradle of this branch of mediæval literature. Geoffrey's history was new to everybody in England (and also, as it appears, in Wales); and it excited not only great interest, but apparently great admiration, for it was seized upon by the metrical chroniclers in Anglo-Norman and English, such as Gaimar and Wace, who were contemporary with Geoffrey of Monmouth himself, and a little later the Anglo-Saxon Layamon, who turned it into verse with more or less of variation and amplification. It is quite evident, nevertheless, from a comparison of these versions with the original, that the various writers had no knowledge of the romantic stories they tell independent of that original, and that their alterations and amplifications were the mere liberties which they considered themselves authorized as poets to take. Nevertheless, in the course of the second half of the twelfth century the story of king Arthur and his knights took suddenly a great development, and presents us with a multitude of new incidents with which Geoffrey of Monmouth could not have been acquainted. It is impossible now to decide from whence these new incidents were derived, or how much of them were the mere invention of the writers,

who seem indeed to have worked into their narrative popular stories then current, and derived from various sources, but which had really no relation to it. I will, therefore, not venture upon any discussion of these questions, but proceed simply to state the known facts of the literary history of the long and curious romance of which an edition is given to the public in the present volume.

The first of these romances, which composed this new development of the story—for the series of which we are speaking consists of several separate narratives—is that of the *St. Graal*, the holy vessel or ‘*hanap*,’ which had been preserved by Joseph of Arimathea after the death of the Saviour, and which was pretended to have been brought, after many marvellous adventures, into the isle of Britain. This history has no immediate connection with that of king Arthur, but seems to have been founded on some mysterious religious legend, brought perhaps from the East during the age of the crusades. The next in order of date of these compilations is the history of the prophet and enchanter Merlin, which, composed perhaps partly of Breton legends, was certainly built upon the foundation which had been laid by Geoffrey of Monmouth. We have, however, here the events of king Arthur’s reign, which had been told briefly by Geoffrey, much amplified, and we are introduced to some of the principal knights of the round table. The third of these romances was that of *Lancelot du Lac*, which is devoted to the adventures of that hero and to his amours with queen Guenever. This was followed by the *Queste du St. Graal*, or search of the *St. Graal*, which had been already partly related in the romance of *Lancelot*, and which is now conducted more especially by *Perceval*, *Gawayne*, *Lancelot*, and the son of the latter, *Galaad* or *Galahad*, who finally succeeds in achieving the adventure. The fifth and last of these romances was that which was more particularly known as the *Mort Artus*, or *Mort d’Arthure*, in which *Lancelot*’s intrigues with the queen and the enmity of *Gawaine*’s brothers lead to the war which ended in king Arthur’s death, and which concludes the history of all his adventurous knights.

These five romances are written in prose, in the Anglo-Norman dialect of the French tongue; and there can be no

doubt that they were compiled by two writers of the reign of Henry II of England, one who names himself Robert de Borron, and the other a celebrated writer who lived at that monarch's court, and is known popularly by the name of Walter Mapes, though his name is usually written Map in the manuscripts. The first of these writers claims the Roman du St. Graal and the History of Merlin, while Mapes was the author of Lancelot, the Queste du St. Graal, and the Mort Artus.

Subsequently to the appearance of these romances, two new writers of the same stamp came into the field, one of them giving us his name as Lucas de Gast, the other Helie de Borron, said to have been a kinsman of Robert de Borron. The latter appears to have written as late as the reign of Henry III. To these two writers severally we owe the first and second parts of the romance of Tristan, or Tristram, a new hero, unknown to the previous histories of king Arthur and his knights, but who from this time forward assumes a very prominent place among the knights of the round table. For some reason or other—perhaps mere caprice—the two writers of the romance of Tristan take every opportunity of blackening the character of sir Gawaine, who was represented as one of the purest models of knight-hood in the previous romances; and it is to them we owe the history of king Pellinore, and of the great feud between his sons and sir Gawaine and his brethren. Helie de Borron also compiled a new and very extensive romance, which, under the title of Gyron le Courtois, commemorated a new series of heroes, including Gyron himself, Meliadus of Léonnois, and several others.

This mass of romance soon became popular, as we may judge from the number of manuscripts which still remain, and it formed a sort of code of knight-errantry which exercised a considerable influence on the feudal spirit and sentiments of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. A crowd of writers in different languages selected particular incidents from these romances, or abridged the whole, and published them in verse and in more popular forms; and this cycle of romance became thus more and more developed, and in these new forms and editions occupied continually a more important place in the literature of the day. In these

metrical forms, the romances of king Arthur and his knights might be chaunted in the baronial hall or chamber in the same manner as the *Chansons de Geste* and the other classes of metrical romances. It would hardly be in place here to give any account of the numerous metrical romances and other poems belonging to this cycle which appeared during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. As the feudal manners began to degenerate, and the practice of chaunting the romances was abandoned, the metrical versions, the language of which became sooner obsolete, began also to lose their popularity, and gave way to almost a rage for the romances in prose, which, especially among the great chiefs on the continent, were looked upon with a feeling of reverential respect, as the grand and almost sole repositories of the spirit and principles of feudalism; and this was the state of feeling when the invention of the art of printing came to facilitate the multiplication of copies of books. The French printers of the latter half of the fifteenth century, and of the earlier part of the century following, produced a considerable number of editions, generally in folio, of the long French prose romances relating to the *St. Graal*, to king Arthur and his knights, and especially to the adventures of sir Tristram, whose story appears to have become permanently the most popular of them all.

Although this cycle of romances had, as we have seen, first made its appearance in England, it seems never to have been so popular here as in France; and it held by no means a prominent place in our literature at the time when so many editions were issuing from the presses of the French printers. A few English metrical romances belonging to this class are found in manuscripts of the fifteenth century, but they are generally unique copies, and I doubt whether they were in any degree of vogue. Even Caxton, who had evidently a taste for French literature, did not think of printing a book on this subject, until he was pressed to do it, as he informs us, by 'many noble and dyvers gentylmen of this royaume'; and then he seems to have been at a loss to find any book which would suit his purpose, until he was helped out of this difficulty by sir Thomas Malory, who had compiled a book 'oute of certeyn bookes of Frensshe, and reduced it into Englysshe.' All we seem to know of

sir Thomas Malory is, that he tells us himself, at the conclusion of his book, that he was a knight, and that he completed his compilation in the ninth year of the reign of Edward IV, that is, in the course of the year 1469, or early in 1470, or more than fifteen years before Caxton printed it. The statement of some of the old bibliographers, that he was a Welshman, is probably a mere supposition founded on the character of his book.

We have no exact information as to the method pursued by Malory in his compilation, or as to the materials he used, although it is clear that a large portion of his book is taken from the great prose romances of Merlin, Lancelot, Tristram, the *Queste du St. Graal*, and the *Mort Artus*. He has adopted throughout the unfavourable view of the character of sir Gawaine which appears to have been established in France by the popularity of Tristram, although it was quite contrary to the general tone of the English romances. He has considerably modified some parts of the story in the course of abridgment, and omitted many of the most important and characteristic incidents—in Tristram and Lancelot especially—while he sometimes gives incidents which are not found related in the same way elsewhere, and which seem to show that he made use of some materials which are no longer known to exist. Malory takes care to remind us continually that his authorities were in the French language, by his frequent references to the 'French book,' which references, it may be remarked, are in the greater number of cases omitted in the text from which the present edition is taken.

Caxton tells us that he finished the printing of *La Mort Darthur*, as he entitles the book, in the abbey of Westminster, on the last day of July, 1485. This book has now become so rare that only one complete copy is known, which was formerly in the Harleian library, and is now in that of the Earl of Jersey at Osterley park, Middlesex. An imperfect copy, now in Earl Spencer's library, was purchased, as we learn from Lowndes, for the large sum of £320. These, I believe, are the only copies of Caxton's edition known to exist.

Two editions of this work were printed by Caxton's successor in the art of printing, Wynkyn de Worde, one in 1498,

the other in 1529. Only one copy of each is at present known to be in existence. Wynkyn de Worde entitled his editions, 'The Booke of Kynge Arthur.'

William Copland, another well-known early English printer, reprinted this work in 1557, under the title of 'The Story of Kynge Arthur, and also of his Knyghtes of the Rounde Table.'

This title was also adopted by Thomas East, who printed two editions, one in folio, the other 4to, and both equally without date. It is probable, from the similarity of the title, that East printed from Copland's edition.

We can trace no other reprint of this work until the year 1634, when the last of the black-letter editions was published in three parts, in 4to, with three separate titles. It is proved, by a considerable omission in this edition, that it was printed from a copy of the folio edition by East, in which a leaf in the third part was wanting¹.

Malory's history of King Arthur appears not to have been printed again until 1816. In that year two different popular editions appeared, undertaken apparently quite independently and unknowingly of each other. Both were printed in the same size, 24mo, the one in three volumes, the other in two. The edition in three volumes is understood to have been edited by Joseph Haslewood, and is spoken of as an especially 'correct reprint' of the edition of 1634. This, however, is so little the case, that in reading it over we are led to conclude that the correcting of the text in this edition was left to the printers themselves. Here and there alterations were made to fit the narrative for the taste or understanding of the ordinary modern reader; yet, though alterations of this kind are often made without much judgment, gross and evident misprints of the edition of 1634 are left uncorrected, and others are added which as evidently arose from the misreading of the old black-letter by the modern compositor. Thus, in the very first chapter, the lady Igraine is said to be 'passing *wife*,' instead of 'passing *wise*'; in the thirty-ninth chapter of the third part, the blunder of the edition of 1634, in printing *war wost* instead of *warwolf*, is strictly preserved in the edition ascribed to Haslewood². Again, in the hundred and sixty-fifth chapter of the same

¹ See book iii. p. 411, of the present edition.

² *Ibid.* p. 497.

part, the printer of this modern edition has actually turned the word *Southsaxe* (Sussex) into *Southfere*, through a mere mistaking, in the black-letter of the original, of the long *s* for *f*, and of *x* for *r*! The editor of this edition, in an 'Advertisement' prefixed to the first volume, complains rather bitterly of the appearance of what he calls the 'rival edition,' which he seems to treat as though it had been got up in a spirit of opposition to his own.

The edition in two volumes, which appears thus to have come out before Haslewood's, belonged to a series of popular editions known as 'Walker's British Classics.' The text is quite as little recommendable as that of Haslewood, and the editor, or printer, has taken as great liberties with it in various ways, especially in altering phrases when he did not understand them. Thus, the editor of this edition, not understanding the *war wost* of the text of 1634, boldly changed the whole sentence as follows, 'for she made hem well a seven years' *war worse*,' which certainly makes a sentence with a meaning, but a meaning that has no relation to the context. This edition gives correctly the words *wise* and *Sussex*, which Haslewood's printer blundered in; but its editor had not discovered the great hiatus in the third part, mentioned above as having risen from the want of a leaf in the copy of East's edition used by the printer of 1634, which was discovered and supplied in the edition ascribed to Haslewood.

Finally, in the year following that of these two editions, in 1817, appeared the well-known 4to edition of the original text of Caxton, which has gained a reputation, as the publishers, no doubt, intended it should, from having the name of Robert Southey attached to it. The text is a mere reprint of Caxton, without any attempt at editing, and was probably left entirely to the care of the printers. It is, therefore, a book useless to the general reader, and is only useful at all because, for reference, it supplies the place of the original, which is inaccessible. The introduction and notes by Southey display the extensive and indiscriminate reading for which the poet was celebrated, but he has done little towards explaining or illustrating his text.

These are all the known editions of the story of king

¹ See book iii. p. 527.

Arthur, as it was given originally to the English reader in the text of sir Thomas Malory and in the types of William Caxton. It is remarkable that the two popular editions published in 1816 have both become rare, and the want of a good edition of this romance has been felt generally. A knowledge of it is, indeed, necessary to enable us to understand the later Middle Ages in one of their important points of view; while it possesses an intrinsic interest, as giving us, in a comprehensive form, a good general sketch of a cycle of romances which through many ages exercised an influence upon literature and art. To meet this want, the present edition has been undertaken. It has been judged advisable to adopt for the text the latest of the old editions, that of 1634; for it is evident that the choice lay between the last and the first, between this we have selected and that of Caxton; as the moment we decided on abandoning Caxton, there was no reason why we should not take that of the reprints which was most readable. This choice was made with the less scruple, as no particular philological value is attached to the language of Caxton's edition, which would certainly be repulsive to the modern reader, while all its value as a literary monument is retained in the reprint. On the other hand, the orthography and phraseology of the edition of 1634, with the sprinkling of obsolete words, not sufficiently numerous to be embarrassing, preserves a certain clothing of mediæval character which we think is one of the charms of the book. The edition of 1634 contains the whole text of Malory's work, and presents in general a verbal copy of it. Not unfrequently, however, the words are a little transposed, while some words are here and there added, and others are exchanged, as obsolete, for words that were better understood, with the notion evidently of making the language more correct or more readable. Many of these alterations are probably the mere work of the compositors; but some appear to have been made by design by some better informed person employed to read over the sheets of that or of some of the preceding editions.

In the present edition I have carefully collated the text of 1634 with that of Caxton, and given in the notes any variations in the latter which seem to be of importance or to present any particular interest. The old printers, especially

those of the seventeenth century, when left to themselves, were, as it is well known, extremely careless, and the books of that period, if not corrected by the authors, are generally full of printers' errors. These I have carefully corrected from the text of Caxton, and in general, where the blunders are self-evident, I have not thought it necessary to point them out. If I have erred at all in this respect, it has been by over caution, and as I advanced in the book I found it necessary to correct the text rather more than in the earlier part. This was the case especially in the third part, in which the old compositors and readers appear to have been more careless than usual, and which abounds with omissions of words and sometimes of parts of sentences, which entirely destroy the meaning, while words have often been changed negligently from mere similarity of sound, without being at all equivalent. There are, however, in the course of the book, some evident corrections of Caxton's text, which itself contains a few misprints, and some variations which appear to have been introduced designedly in the editions immediately following Caxton's, and to have been preserved in the text adopted for the present edition. With these I have not interfered.

I have thought it advisable in a work like this, where the obsolete words and phrases are after all not very numerous, to explain them in the notes. Every reader has not at hand a dictionary of obsolete English; nor, if he had, is it convenient, in reading a book of this description, to be interrupted at every page or two in order to trace out a word in a dictionary. When the same obsolete word recurs after some interval, I have, for the same reason, not hesitated to repeat the explanation. I have avoided loading the text with illustrative and what may perhaps be termed historical notes, confining myself to what seemed almost necessary to render the perusal of the text easy and agreeable to a modern reader. It would not be difficult to increase notes and illustrations of this description to an almost indefinite extent.

With these explanations, it is hoped that the present edition of Malory's *Mort d'Arthure* will be a work acceptable to the public. It contains, as has been stated before, a good comprehensive condensation of the romantic cycle of king

Arthur and his knights, as it first appeared in the great prose compilations of the latter part of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth century, and as it remained popular in those same compilations in the fifteenth. Although a similar class of incidents are perhaps too uniformly repeated, yet these romances are full of life and activity, and are often picturesque; while some knowledge of them is absolutely necessary for those who would understand those Middle Ages which have of late years been so much talked of and have excited so much interest. They differ from the *Chansons de Geste* and the generality of the other mediæval romances in this, that while the former are plain and practical pictures of life in the feudal ages, these embody a sort of mythic code, if I may use such a phrase, of the more elevated principles and spirit of chivalry which the high-minded knight was supposed to labour to imitate. The tone of the morality of this code is certainly not very high; but—it was the morality of feudalism.

14, Sydney Street, Brompton,
May, 1858.

In offering to the public a new edition of these three volumes, I have only to add, that the whole has been carefully revised, that a few errors have been corrected, and that the number of glossarial notes has been somewhat increased, in the hope of making the romance of king Arthur still more acceptable to the general reader.

THOMAS WRIGHT.

October, 1865.

THE MOST
ANCIENT AND
FAMOUS HISTORY
OF THE RENOWNED
PRINCE
ARTHUR
King of *Britaine*,
The first Part.

Wherein is declared his Life and Death,
with all his glorious Battails against the
Saxons, Saracens, and Pagans,
which (for the honour of his
Country) he most wor-
thily achieved.

As also, all the Noble Acts, and Heroicke
Deeds of his Valiant KNIGHTS of
the ROYND TABLE.

Newly refined, and published for the delight, and
profit of the READER.

LONDON,
Printed by *William Stansby*,
for *Iacob Bloome*, 1634.



A PREFACE

OR ADVERTISEMENT TO THE READER AS FOR THE
BETTER ILLUSTRATION AND UNDERSTANDING
OF THIS FAMOUS HISTORIE.

AFTER this kingdome had, for the space of above foure hundred and eighty years, borne the intolerable yoke of the Romane servitude, which began by the conquest which Julius Cæsar made here in the raigne of Cassibellan, king of the Brittaines, seventeene yeares before the Incarnation of Christ, and ended in the time of Gratian, which was three hundred seventie six yeares after Christ, who had slaine Maximinianus, the Romane emperour; which Gratian after being slaine, Vortiger of the blood royall of the Britaine king, did, by usurpation and the murder of Constance, the sonne of Constantius, seize upon the crowne. And being by his wicked life and ill gotten soveraignty, grown odious, and hated by most of his subjects, hee was inforced to send into Germany for the Saxons, to aide and support him. The Saxons having got footing here, never gave over their military diligence till they got full possession of the whole kingdome; chasing the British kings beyond the rivers of Dee and Seaverne in North Wales, in the raigne of Carreticus, in the yeare five hundred eighty sixe. The above said Vortigerne the usurper was deposed, to whom his sonne Vortimer succeeded, but Vortimer was poisoned by Rowan the daughter of Hengist the Saxon, and Vortigerne againe was restored to the crowne; and after nineteene yeares of a troublous raigne, hee and his wife Rowan were burnt in their castle or palace by Aurelius Ambrose, who was of the race of Constance, who formerly had beene murdred by Vortigerne. This Aurelius Ambrose reigned thirty two yeares, to whom succeeded his brother Uter Pendragon, who was the father of Arthur, the great

king of Britaine, of whose worthy acts and noble atchievements this history makes mention. King Uter Pendragon begat Arthur of the beauteous Igraine, wife to the duke of Cornwall, which lady king Uter afterward rewarded, and, by the helpe of Merlin the great magitian, Arthur was brought up and educated. He raigned king of Britaine in anno five hundred and sixteene. In his raigne he curbed the insolent power of the domineering Saxons, he wanne and subdued Denmarke and Norway. He ordained and instituted the order of the round table at Winchester, which was honoured with the number of one hundred and fifty knights. He was victorious beyond the seas against the Saracens, and by his conquests made many of those misbelieving Pagans acknowledge the true God. Whilest he was abroad in these noble and heroicall employments, his nephew, Mordred, whom hee had put in trust with the government of his realme, being puffed up with ambition and possessed with treason, he caused himselfe to be crowned, and usurped the kingdome; which king Arthur hearing of, hee made quicke expedition into this land, and landed at Dover, where the traytor Mordred was with a mighty army to impeach and hinder the kings arrivall. But in spite of all trayterous and rebellious opposition, king Arthur landed his troupes, and after two set battailes he slue Mordred, and with the losse of his owne life, wonne a glorious victory, and being dead, was buried in the towne of Glastenbury in Somersetshire, after hee had raigned sixteene yeares, to whom next succeeded in the Britaine throne Constantine the fifth, being a kinsman to king Arthur, and sonne to Cadors duke of Cornwall.

All this former narration is set downe to confute the errours of such as are of an opinion that there was never any such man as king Arthur, and though historians doe disagree in their chronologies about times and places, some having written partially, some neglectively, and some fabulously and superstitiously, yet in the mayne points which are most materiall, they doe all conclude of the predecessours and successours of king Arthur, according as I have formerly related. It is apparent in all histories that there were nine most famous and renowned kings and princes, who for their noble acts and worthy atchievements, are stiled

the nine worthies, and it is most execrable infidelity to doubt that there was a Joshua, it is wicked Atheisme to make a question if there was a David, it is hatefull to be diffident of a sometime Judas Macchabeus; besides there are none, of any capacitie, but doe believe there was an Alexander. The world is possest with the acknowledgement of the life and death of Julius Cæsar, and the never dying fame of the illustrious Trojan Hector is perspicuous; we must all approve of the being of that magnanimous prince Godfrey duke of Bulloigne, who was the christian generall at the conquest of Jerusalem, in the yeare 1110. Besides, France, Germany, and all the christian world hath in fresh and admired memory the famous emperour Charlemaigne or Charles the Great.

And shall the Jewes and the Heathen be honoured in the memory and magnificent prowesse of their worthies? shall the French and Germane nations glorifie their triumphs with their Godfrey and Charles, and shall we of this island be so possest with incredulitie, diffidence, stupiditie, and ingratitude, to deny, make doubt, or expresse in speech and history, the immortall name and fame of our victorious Arthur. All the honour we can doe him is to honour our selves in remembrance of him. This following history was first written in the French and Italian tongues, so much did the poets and chronologers of forraine nations admire our Arthur. It was many yeares after the first writing of it, translated into English, by the painfull industry of one sir Thomas Maleore, knight, in the ninth yeare of the raigne of king Edward the Fourth, about one hundred and fifty two yeares past; wherein the reader may see the best forme and manner of writing and speech that was in use at those times. In many places fables and fictions are inserted, which may be a blemish to the reputation of what is true in this history, and it is unfitting for us to raze or blot out all the errours of our ancestours, for by our taking consideration of them, wee may be the better induced to beleieve and reverence the truth. It is 1114 years since king Arthurs raigne, which was long before the dayes of Edward the Fourth, whereby it may be mused what speech they used above 1100 yeares agoe, when as it was so plaine and simple in king Edwards time.

And therefore, reader, I advertise thee to deale with this book as thou wouldest doe with thy house or thy garment, if the one doe want but a little repaire thou wilt not (madly) pull downe the whole frame, if the other hath a small spot or a staine thou wilt not cast it away or burne it, gold hath its drosse, wine hath its lees, man (in all ages) hath his errorrs and imperfections. And though the times are now more accute and sharp-witted, using a more eloquent and ornated stile and phrase in speech and writing then they did, who lived so many yeares past, yet it may be that in the age to come, our successours may hold and esteeme of us as ridiculously as many of our over-nice critickes doe of their and our progenitours, as we are refined in words I wish we were reformed in deeds, and as we can talke better, it were well if wee would not doe worse. Wee perceive their darkness through our light, let not our light blind us that we may not see our owne ignorance. In many places this volume is corrected (not in language but in phrase), for here and there king Arthur or some of his knights were declared in their communications to sweare prophane, and use superstitious speeches, all, or the most part, of which is either amended or quite left out, by the paines and industry of the compositor and corrector at the presse, so that as it is now it may passe for a famous piece of antiquity, revived almost from the gulph of oblivion, and renewed for the pleasure and profit of present and future times.

As (by the favour of Heaven) this kingdome of Britaine was graced with one worthy, let us with thankfulnes acknowledge him; let us not account it our shame, that he hath bin our countries honour; let us not be more cruell then death to smother or murder his name; or let us not be worse then the grave in burying his favour. Thus, reader, I leave thee at thy pleasure to reade but not to judge, except thou judge with understanding. The asse is no competent judge betwixt the owle and the nightingale for the sweetnes of their voices; cloth of Arras or hangings of tapistry are not fit to adorne a kitchin, no more are ketles, pots, and spits to hang in a ladies bed-chamber. Neither is it beseeming for a man to censure that which his ignorance cannot perceive, or his pride and malice will prejudicate or cavill at.

[THE PROLOGUE.¹]

AFTER that I had accomplysshed and fynysshed dyvers hystories, as well of contemplacyon as of other hystorial and worldly actes of grete conquerours and prynces, and also certeyn bookes of ensaumples and doctryne, many noble and dyvers gentylmen of thys royame of Englund camen and demaunded me many and oftymes wherfore that I have not do make and enprynte the noble hystorye of the saynt greal, and of the moost renomед crysten kyng, fyrst and chyef of the thre best crysten and worthy, kyng Arthur, whyche ought moost to be remembred emonge us Englysshe men tofore al other crysten kynges. For it is notoyrly knowen thorough the unyversal world that there been ix. worthy and the best that ever were, that is to wete, thre paynyns, thre Jewes, and thre crysten men. As for the paynyns, they were tofore the incarnacyon of Cryst, whiche were named, the fyrst Hector of Troye, of whome thystorye is comen bothe in balade and in prose; the second Alysaunder the grete; and the thyrd Julyus Cezar, emperour of Rome, of whome thystories ben wel kno and had. And as for the thre Jewes, whyche also were tofore thyncarnacyon of our Lord, of whome the fyst was duc Josue, whyche brought the chyl dren of Israhel into the londe of byheste; the second Davyd kyng of Jherusalem; and the thyrd Judas Machabeus; of these thre the Byble reherceth al theyr noble hystories and actes. And sythe the sayd incarnacyon have ben thre noble crysten men stalled and admytted thorough the unyversal world into the nombre of the ix. beste and worthy, of whome was fyrst the noble

¹ This, and what the edition of 1634 calls the preface to the Christian reader, are from Caxton's edition, and they are here printed verbatim from that edition, of which they will serve as a specimen. The headings or titles of the edition of 1634 are given in brackets.

Arthur, whos noble actes I purpose to wryte in this present book here folowyng; the second was Charlemayn, or Charles the grete, of whome thystorye is had in many places bothe in Frensshe and Englysshe; and the thyrd and last was Godefray of Boloyn, of whos actes and lyf I made a book unto the excellent prynce and kyng of noble memorye kyng Edward the fourth¹. The said noble jentylmen instantly requyred me temprynte thystorye of the sayd noble kyng and conquerour kyng Arthur, and of his knyghtes, wyth thystorye of the saynt greal, and of the deth and endyng of the sayd Arthur; affermyng that I ouzt rather tenprynte his actes and noble feates, than of Godefroye of Boloyn, or ony of the other eyght, consydering that he was a man borne wythin this royaume, and kyng and emperour of the same.

And that there ben in Frensshe dyvers and many noble volumes of his actes, and also of his knyghtes. To whom I answerd, that dyvers men holde oppynyon that there was no suche Arthur, and that alle suche bookes as been maad of hym, ben but fayned and fables, bycause that somme cronycles make of hym no mencyon ne remembre hym noo thynge ne of his knyghtes. Wherto they answerd, and one in specyal sayd, that in hym that shold say or thynke that there was never suche a kyng callyd Arthur, myght wel be aretted grete folye and blyndenesse; for he sayd that there were many evydences of the contrarye. Fyrst ye may see his sepulture in the monasterye of Glastyngburye, and also in Polycronycon, in the v book the syxte chappytre, and in the seventh book the xxiii chappytre, where his body was buryed and after founden and translated into the sayd monasterye. Ye shal se also in thystorye of Bochas in his book *de casu principum*, parte of his noble actes and also of his falle. Also Galfrydus², in his Brutyshe book, recounteth his lyf. And in divers places of Englund many remembraunces ben yet of hym and shall remayne perpetuelly, and also of his knyghtes. Fyrst, in the abbay of Westmestre at saynt Edwardes shryne remaineth the

¹ *Edward the fourth*.—This book was printed by Caxton at Westminster in 1481, and therefore about three years and a half before the appearance of Caxton's *King Arthur*.

² *Galfrydus*.—Of course he means Geoffrey of Monmouth.

- prynte of his seal in reed waxe closed in beryll, in whych is
- wryton *Patricius Arthurus, Britannie, Gallie, Germanie, Dacie, imperator*. Item, in the castel of Dover¹ ye may see Gauwayns skulle, and Cradoks mantel; at Wynchester², the rounde table; in other places, Launcelottes swerde, and many other thynges. Thenne al these thynges consydered, there can no man reasonably gaynsaye but there was a kyng of thys lande named Arthur. For in al places crysten and hethen he is reputed and taken for one of the ix. worthy, and the fyrst of the thre crysten men. And also he is more spoken of beyonde the see, moo bookes made of his noble actes, than there be in Englund, as wel in Duche, Ytalyen, Spanysse, and Grekysshe, as in Frensshe. And yet of record remayne in wytnesse of hym in Wales, in the toune of Camelot³, the grete stones and mervayllous werkys of yron lyeing under the grounde, and ryal vautes, which dyvers now lyvyng hath seen. Wherfor it is a mervayl why he is no more renommed in his owne contreye, sauf onelye it accordeth to the word of God, whyche sayth that no man is accept for a prophete in his owne contreye. Thenne al these thynges forsayd alledged, I coude not wel denye but that there was suche a noble kyng named Arthur, and reputed one of the ix worthy, and fyrst and chyef of the cristen men, and many noble volumes be made of hym and of his noble knyghtes in Frensshe, which I have seen and redde beyonde the see, which been not had in our maternal tongue, but in Walsshe ben many, and also in Frensshe, and somme in Englysshe, but no wher nygh alle. Wherfore suche as have late ben drawen oute bryefly into Englysshe, I have after the symple connyng that God hath sente to me, under the favour and correctyon of al noble lordes and gentylmen, enprysed to enprynte a book of the noble hystories of the sayd kynge Arthur, and of certeyn of his knyghtes, after a cotype unto me delyvered, whyche cotype syr Thomas Malorye dyd take oute of

¹ *Castel of Dover*.—See at the end of the History of King Arthur, book iii. p. 526 of the present edition.

² *At Wynchester*.—This 'rounde table' is still preserved at Winchester, and is a relic of some interest in other points of view, but it is hardly necessary to state that it belongs to a far more recent date than that which Caxton would seem to have given to it.

³ *Camelot*.—It is curious that the writer of this preface should have placed Camelot in Wales, contrary to the text of the book itself, which tells us several times that Camelot was Winchester. Both statements are quite erroneous. See book i. p. 86.

certyn bookes of Frensshe and reduced it into Englysshe. And I, accordyng to my cople, have doon sette it in en- prynte, to the entente that noblemen may see and lerne the noble acts of chyvalrye, the jentyl and vertuous dedes, that somme knyghtes used in tho days, by whyche they came to honour, and how they that were vycious were punysshed and often put to shame and rebuke, humbly bysechyng al noble lordes and ladyes, wyth al other estates, of what estate or degree they been of, that shal see and rede in this sayd book and werke, that they take the good and honest actes in their remembraunce, and to folowe the same. Wherin they shalle fynde many joyous and playsaunt hystories and noble and renommed acts of humanyte, gentylnesse, and chyvalryes. For herein may be seen noble chyvalrye, curtosye, humanyte, frendlynnesse, hardynesse, love, frendshyp, cowardyse, murdre, hate, vertue, synne. Doo after the good, and leve the evyl, and it shal brynge you to good fame and renomme. And for to passe the tyme, this book shal be plesaunte to rede in, but for to gyve fayth and byleve that al is trewe that is containyd herin, ye be at your lyberte; but al is wryton for our doctryne, and for to beware that we falle not to vyce ne synne, but texercyse and folowe vertu, by whyche we may come and atteyne to good fame and renomme in thys lyf, and after thys shorte and transytorye lyf to come unto everlastyng blysse in heven, the whyche he graunt us that reygne in heven the blessyd Trynitye. Amen.

[THE PREFACE OF WILLIAM CAXTON TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.]

THENNE to procede forth in thys sayd book, whyche I dyrecte unto alle noble prynces, lordes, and ladyes, gentylmen, or gentylwymmen, that desyre to rede or here redde of the noble and joyous hystorye of the grete conquerour and excellent kyng, kyng Arthur, somtyne kyng of thys noble royalme, thenne callyd Brytaygne, I, Wylliam Caxton, symple persone, present thys book folowyng, whyche I have enprysed tenprynte¹. And treateth of the noble actes, feates of armes, of chyvalrye, prowessse, hardynesse, humanyte, love, curtosye, and veray gentylnesse, wyth many wonderful hystories and adventures. And for to understonde bryefly the contente of thys volume, I have devyded it into xxi bookes, and every book chapytred as here after shal by Goddes grace folowe. The fyrst book shal treatate how Utherpendragon gate the noble conquerour kyng Arthur, and conteyneth xxviii chappytres. The second book treateth of Balyn, the noble knyght, and conteyneth xix chappytres. The thyrd book treateth of the maryage of kyng Arthur to quene Guenever, wyth other maters,

¹ The edition of 1634, in which Caxton's division into 'books' is abandoned and the whole is divided into three parts or volumes, omits the remainder of Caxton's 'preface,' and adds in its place:—*In which all those that dispose them to eschew idlenesse, which is the mother of all vices, may read historical matters. Some are willing to reade devout meditations of the humanitie and passion of our Saviour Jesus Christ; some the lives and painefull martyrdomes of holy saints; some delight in moralisacion and poeticall stories; and some in knightly and victorious deeds of noble princes and conquerours, as of this present volume, which treateth of the noble acts and feates of armes, of chivalry, prowessse, hardynesse, humanitie, love, courtesie, and gentilnesse, with divers and many wonderfull histories and adventures. And for to understand briefly the contents of this present volume, comprehending the valiant acts of this noble conquerour, with his lamentable death caused by sir Mordred his sonne and the subjects of his realme, I have devyded it into three parts, and every part into sundry chapters, as hereafter, by Gods grace, shall follow.*

and conteyneth fyftene chappytres. The fourth book, how Merlyn was assotted, and of warre maad to kyng Arthur, and conteyneth xxix chappytres. The fyfthe book treateth of the conqueste of Lucius themperour, and conteyneth xii chappytres. The syxthe book treateth of syr Launcelot and syr Lyonel, and mervayllous adventures, and conteyneth xviii chappytres. The seventh book treateth of a noble knyght called syr Gareth, and named by syr Kaye Beaumayns, and conteyneth xxxvi chappytres. The eyght book treateth of the byrthe of syr Trystram, the noble knyght, and of hys actes, and conteyneth xli chappytres. The ix book treateth of a knyght named by syr Kaye Le cote male taylle, and also of syr Trystram, and conteyneth xliiii chappytres. The x. book treateth of syr Trystram and other mervayllous adventures, and conteyneth lxxxviii chappytres. The xi book treateth of syr Launcelot and syr Galahad, and conteyneth xliiii chappytres. The xii book treateth of syr Launcelot and his madnesse, and conteyneth xliiii chappytres. The xiii book treateth how Galahad came fyrst to kyng Arthurs courte, and the quest how the sangreall was begonne, and conteyneth xx chappytres. The xiiii book treateth of the queste of the sangreal, and conteyneth x chappytres. The xv book treateth of syr Launcelot, and conteyneth vi chappytres. The xvi book treateth of syr Bors and syr Lyonel his brother, and conteyneth xvii chappytres. The xvii book treateth of the sangreal, and conteyneth xxiii chappytres. The xviii book treateth of syr Launcelot and the quene, and conteyneth xxv chappytres. The xix book treateth of quene Guenever and Launcelot, and conteyneth xlii chappytres. The xx book treateth of the pyetous deth of Arthur, and conteyneth xxii chappytres. The xxi book treateth of his last departyng, and how syr Launcelot came to revenge his dethe, and conteyneth xlii chappytres. The somme is xxi bookes, whyche conteyne the somme of v honderd and vii chappytres, as more playnly shal folowe hereafter.

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HISTORIE OF KING ARTHUR

AND HIS NOBLE KNIGHTS OF

THE ROUND TABLE.

BOOK I.

CHAP. I.—*How Utherpendragon sent for the duke of Cornewayle and Igrayne his wife, and of their sodaine departing againe.*

IT befell in the dayes of the noble Utherpendragon, when he was king of England, there was a mighty and a noble duke in Cornewayle¹, that held long time warre against him; and the duke was named the duke of Tintagil²; and king Uther sent for this duke, charging him to bring his wife with him, for shee was called a right faire lady, and a passing wise, and Igrayne was her name. So when the duke and his wife were come to the king, they were both accorded, and the king liked and loved this lady well. But she was a passing good woman, and she said to the duke, her husband, 'I counsell you that we depart from hence sodainely, that we may ride all night³ to our owne castell.' And so they departed, that neither the king nor none of his counsell were ware of their departing. As soone as king Uther knew of their departing so sodainly, he called to him his privie counsell, and told them of the sodaine departing of the duke and his wife. Then they advised the king to send for the duke and his wife, 'and, if he will not come at your commandement, then may yee doe your best, for then have you a cause to make mighty warre upon him.' So that was done, and the messengers had their answeres, and that was this, shortly, that neither hee nor his wife would not come at him. Then was the king

¹ Called by Geoffrey of Monmouth *Gorlois dux Cornubiae*, and his wife *Igernæ*.

² *Tintagil*.—The small town of Tintagell, in Cornwall, is situated on the coast of the Bristol Channell, about four miles from Camelford. The ruins of the Castle, which had become so celebrated in mediæval romance, are still seen on the brow of a rock, partly insulated, overlooking the sea.

³ *Ride all night*.—From Camelot in Somersetshire, where Uther is evidently supposed to be holding his court, they would, by riding all night, reach Tintagell before they could be pursued: but not so if, according to the account of Geoffrey of Monmouth, the king had been holding his court in London.

wonderous wroth. And then the king sent him plaine word, againe, and bad him bee ready, for within threescore¹ dayes he would fetch him out of the strongest castle that hee had. Then the duke went and furnished and garnished two strong castles of his, of the which the one was Tyntagyll, and that other called Terabyl². So his wife, dame Igrayne, hee put in the castle of Tyntagyll, and hee put himselfe in the castle of Terrabyll. Then in all haste came Uther with a great hoast, and layd a siege about the castle of Terrabyll. Then king Uther fell sicke. Then came to king Uther, sir Ulfius³, a noble knight, and asked the king why hee was sicke? 'I shall tell thee,' said the king, 'I am sicke for anger and for love of fair Igrayne that I may not be whole.' 'Well, my lord,' said sir Ulfius, 'I shal seeke Merlyn⁴, and he shal get you remedy that your heart shal be pleased.' So Ulfius departed, and by adventure he met Merlyn in a beggers araye. 'Wel,' sayd Merlyn, 'I know whom thou seekest, for thou seekest Merlin, therfore seeke no further, for I am he, and if king Uther wil bee sworne to me to fulfil my desire, the which shal be his honour and profit more then mine, I shal cause him to have all his desire.'

CHAP. II.—*How Utherpendragon made warre on the duke of Cornwaile, and how by the meanes of Merlyn he visited the duchesse.*

THEN Ulfius came unto king Utherpendragon, and told him he had met with Merlyn. Therewithall Ulfius was ware where Merlyn stood at the porch of the pavilions dore. 'Sir,' said Merlyn, 'I know all your heart every dele; so you will be sworne to mee, as you be a true king anynted, to fulfil my desire, you shal have your desire.' Then the king was sworne upon the four Evangelists. 'Sir,' sayd Merlyn, 'this is my desire. When your first son is borne, it shall bee delivered to mee for to nourish there as I will have it, for it shall be your worship and the childes availe.' 'I will well,' said the king, 'as thou wilt have it.' 'Now make you ready,' said Merlyn, 'this

¹ *Threescore*.—Caxton's text has *within xl. dayes*.

² *Terabyl*.—Geoffrey of Monmouth calls the castle in which duke Gorlois established himself *castellum Dimiltoc*. It does not seem now possible to identify the place intended by either of these names.

³ *Ulfius*.—This is one of the names of Teutonic origin which are mixed up so heterogeneously in these strange romances. It is hardly necessary to remark that it is the Latinized form of the Anglo-Saxon name Wulf. Geoffrey of Monmouth calls him *Ulfius de Ricaradock*. In the early French romances it is *Ulfins*, and the *Ulfius* of the English editions may be a mere misreading.

⁴ *Merlyn*.—Merlin is here introduced rather abruptly, and the original story of Merlin's birth and early years, which is here omitted, is altered in the subsequent romances. According to Geoffrey of Monmouth (lib. vi. cc. 18, 19), Merlin had been the court magician since the time of Vortigirn, who had caused him to be sought as the only one capable of relieving him out of the difficulty he had encountered in raising a castle on Salisbury plain. This version of the story also is followed in the early French prose romance of Merlin.

night shall you see Igrayne in the castle of Tintagyll, and you shall be like the duke her husband¹. Ulfius shall be like sir Brastias, a knight of the dukes, and I will be like a knight called sir Jordanus², a knight of the dukes. So, as they had devised, it was done. But the duke of Tintagill espied how the king rode from the siege of Terrabill, and, therefore, that night he issued out of the castle at a posterne for to have distressed the king's hoast. And so the duke himselfe was slain or ever the king came at the castle of Tintagill. So king Uther visited Igrayne more then three houres after the death of the duke, and, ere day came, Merlin came to the king and bad him make him ready; and so he kist the lady Igrayne and departed in all haste. But when the lady hard tell of the duke, her husband, then shee marvelled who that might be that came to her in likenesse of her lord, so she mourned privily and held her peace. Then all the barons prayed the king of accord betweene the lady Igrayne and him. So at the last the king and she met together: and in all haste they were married in a morning with great mirth and joy. And King Lot³ of Lowthan and of Orkeny then wedded Margawse, that was Gawyns mother. And king Nentres⁴ of the land of Garlot wedded Elain. All this was done at the request of king Uther. And the third sister, Morgan le Fay⁵, was put to schole in a nunry, and there shee learned so much that shee was a great clarke of nigromancy⁶, and after shee was wedded to king Urience⁷ of the land of Gore, that was sir Ewayns⁸ le Blanchemaynes father.

¹ *Like the duke*.—It may be remarked that this incident is evidently taken from the fable of Jupiter and Alcmena, which was very popular, under different forms, in the Middle Ages. Arthur, the offspring of this intrigue, answers to the classical Hercules.

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⁴ *King Nentres*.—In the English metrical romance of Merlin he is called Nanter, king of Gerlot; his wife is there called Blazine, 'eldest daughter' of Utherpendragon, and he is stated to have had a son named Gorlaas.

⁵ *Morgan le Fay*.—This celebrated personage of romance was, according to the author of the prose romance of Merlin, an illegitimate daughter of Iguerne, though it is not explained how this happened. It was, we are told, on her mother's marriage with king Uther that she was sent to the nunnery, where she employed herself in studying magic. This may perhaps account for the ill-will she so constantly bore to her half-brother Arthur.

⁶ *Nigromancy*.—This was the old English form of what is more correctly called necromancy.

⁷ *Urience*.—Urience is the Urianus of Geoffrey, who makes him king of the *Murefenses*, or people of Murray in Scotland. Hist. Brit. ix. 9. The Urien of medieval romance.

⁸ *Ewayns*.—Iwayn; a well-known hero of medieval romance.

wonderous wroth. And then the king sent him plaine word, againe, and bad him bee ready, for within threescore¹ dayes he would fetch him out of the strongest castle that hee had. Then the duke went and furnished and garnished two strong castles of his, of the which the one was Tyntagyll, and that other called Terabyl². So his wife, dame Igrayne, hee put in the castle of Tyntagyll, and hee put himselfe in the castle of Terrabyll. Then in all haste came Uther with a great hoast, and layd a siege about the castle of Terrabyll. Then king Uther fell sicke. Then came to king Uther, sir Ulfius³, a noble knight, and asked the king why hee was sicke? 'I shall tell thee,' said the king, 'I am sicke for anger and for love of fair Igrayne that I may not be whole.' 'Well, my lord,' said sir Ulfius, 'I shal seeke Merlyn⁴, and he shal get you remedy that your heart shal be pleased.' So Ulfius departed, and by adventure he met Merlyn in a beggers araye. 'Wel,' sayd Merlyn, 'I know whom thou seekest, for thou seekest Merlin, therfore seeke no further, for I am he, and if king Uther wil bee sworne to me to fulfil my desire, the which shal be his honour and profit more then mine, I shal cause him to have all his desire.'

CHAP. II.—*How Utherpendragon made warre on the duke of Cornwaile, and how by the meanes of Merlyn he visited the duchesse.*

THEN Ulfius came unto king Utherpendragon, and told him he had met with Merlyn. Therewithall Ulfius was ware where Merlyn stood at the porch of the pavilions dore. 'Sir,' said Merlyn, 'I know all your heart every dele; so you will be sworne to mee, as you be a true king anyoynted, to fulfil my desire, you shal have your desire.' Then the king was sworne upon the four Evangelists. 'Sir,' sayd Merlyn, 'this is my desire. When your first son is borne, it shall bee delivered to mee for to nourish there as I will have it, for it shall be your worship and the childes availe.' 'I will well,' said the king, 'as thou wilt have it.' 'Now make you ready,' said Merlyn, 'this

¹ *Threescore*.—Caxton's text has *within xl. dayes*.

² *Terabyl*.—Geoffrey of Monmouth calls the castle in which duke Gorlois established himself *castellum Dimilioc*. It does not seem now possible to identify the place intended by either of these names.

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CHAP. III.—*Of the birth of King Arthur, and of his nourishing, and of the death of king Utherpendragon, and how Arthur was chosen king, and of wonders and marvailes of a sword that was taken out of stone by the said Arthur.*

WHEN the queene Igrayne had been wedded unto king Uther halfe a year, hee told her how his visit to Tintagil Castle on the night of the duke's death had been accomplished by Merlin's counsell. 'It was I myself,' said the king, 'that came in the likeness of the duke; and therefore feare you not.' Soone came Merlin unto the king, and said, 'Sir, you must provide you for the nourishing of your child.' 'As thou wilt,' said the king, 'be it.' 'Well,' said Merlin, 'I know a lord that is a passing true man and a faithful, and he shal have the nourishing of your child; his name is sir Ector¹, and when the child is borne, let it bee delivered unto mee at yonder posterne unchristned.' As Merlin had devised, so was it done, and when sir Ector was come, he made affiance to the king for to nourish the child like as the king desired, and there the king granted sir Ector great rewards. Then when the childe was borne, the king commanded two knights and two ladies to take him bound in rich cloath of gold, 'and deliver him to what poore man you meete at the posterne gate of the castle.' So the child was delivered unto Merlin, and so hee bare it forth unto sir Ector, and made an holy man to christen him, and named him Arthur. Then within two yeeres king Uther fell sick², and in the meane while his enemies usurped upon him, and did a great battle upon his men, and slew many of his people. Then they carried the king forth in a horse-litter with a great hoast toward his enemies. And at Saint Albons there met with the king a great hoast of the north; and that day king Uther's men overcame the northen battle and slew much people, and put the remnant to flight. And then the king returned to London, and made great joy of his victorie. And within a while after hee was passing sore sicke, so that three dayes and three nights hee was speecheles.

'There is none other remedy,' said Merlin, 'but God wil have his wil. But looke that yee al his barons bee before him to-morrow, and God and I shal make him to speak.' So on the morrow al the barons with Merlin came before the king. Then Merlin said aloud unto king Uther: 'Sir, shall your sonne Arthur bee king after your dayes of this realme?' Then Utherpendragon turned him, and said in hearing of them all: 'I give him Gods blessing and mine, and bid him pray for my soule, and righteously and worshipfully that he claime the

¹ *Sir Ector*.—He is called Sir Antour in the English metrical life of Merlin.

² *King Uther fell sick*.—The incidents of Uther's last battle, of his being carried to it in a litter, and of his subsequent death, are taken from Geoffrey of Monmouth.

'crowne upon forfeiture of my blessing.' And therewith hee jealded up the ghost. Then stood the realme in great jeopardie a long while, for every lord that was mighty of men made him strong, and many wende to have beene king. Then Merlin went to the archbishop of Canterbury¹, and counselled him to send for all the lords of the realme, and all the gentlemen of armes, that they should come to London afore Christmasse, that as Jesus was borne on that night, that Hee would of His great mercy shew some miracle who would be rightwise king of this realme. So in the greatest church of London (whether it were Paules² or not, the French booke maketh no mention), when matins and the first masse was done, there was seene in the churchyard, against the hie altar, a great stone foure square, and in the midst thereof was an anvile of steele³, a foote of height, and therein stooke a faire sword naked by the point, and letters of gold were written about the sword that said thus:—WHO SO PULLETH OUT THIS SWORD OF THIS STONE AND ANVILE, IS RIGHTWISE KING BORNE OF ENGLAND. So when al the masses were don, al the states⁴ went for to behold the stone and the sword. And when they saw the scripture, some assaied, such as would have been king. But none might stir the sword nor move it. And then there was made a crie that every man should assaie that would for to win the sword. And upon new yeeres day the barons let make a justes and a turneyment. And so it happened that sir Ector rode to the justs, and with him rode sir Key⁵, his sonne, and yong Arthur that was his nourished brother, and sir Key was made knight at all halowmasse afore. So as they rode toward the justes, sir Key had lost his sword, for hee had left it at his fathers lodging, and so hee prayed yong Arthur to ride for his sword. 'I will with a good will,' said Arthur, and rode fast after the sword; and when he came home, the lady and all were gone out to see the justing. Then Arthur said to himselfe, 'I will ride to the churchyard and take the sword with mee that sticketh in the stone, for my brother sir Key shall not bee without a sword this day.' And so when he came to the church-yard Arthur

¹ *Archbishop of Canterbury*.—He is called Bishop Brice in the English metrical romance.

² *Paules*, or, as in Caxton, *Powlis*. The latter was the old spelling. It is hardly necessary to remark that the doubt of the English compiler of this romance was well founded.

³ Caxton's text says, '*lyke*' an anvylde of steele.

⁴ *States*.—*All the lordes*, Caxton. The meetings of estates belonged to the political history of a later period.

⁵ *Sir Key*.—Caxton has *Syr Kaynus*. Kay (*Caius*), king Arthur's foster-brother and steward, is one of the most celebrated personages in this cycle of romances. He is understood to have been of a good disposition naturally, but this was mixed with a large amount of envy and spitefulness, and some other evil qualities. These defects are ascribed to the fact of his having been taken from his mother's breast to make way for the infant Arthur, and from his thus having sucked a stranger's milk.

alighted, and so hee handled the sword and pulled it out of the stone, and came to his brother sir Key, and delivered him the sword. And assoone as sir Key saw the sword, hee wist well that it was the sword of the stone, and so hee rode to his father, sir Ector, and said: 'Sir, loe here is the sword of the stone; wherefore I must bee king of this land.' When sir Ector beheld the sword, hee returned againe and came to the church, and there they alighted, all three, and went into the church, and anone hee made sir Key to sweare upon a booke how hee came to that sword. 'Sir,' said sir Key, 'by my brother Arthur, for hee brought it to me.' 'How gate you this sword?' said sir Ector to Arthur, whereto Arthur replied, 'When I came home for my brothers sword, I found no body at home for to deliver mee his sword, and so I thought my brother sir Key should not be swordles, and so I came thither and pulled it out of the stone.' 'Now,' said sir Ector to Arthur, 'I understand that you must bee king of this land.' 'Wherefore I?' said Arthur. 'Sir,' said sir Ector, 'for God will have it so; for there should never no man have drawne out this sword but hee shall be rightwise king of this land. Now let me see whether yee can put the sword there as it was and pull it out againe.' 'That is no mastery¹,' said Arthur; and so hee put it in the stone. Therewith sir Ector assayed to pull out the sword, and failed.

CHAP. IV.—*How king Arthur pulled out the sword divers times.*

'NOW assay you,' said sir Ector to sir Key. And anon hee pulled at the sword with all his might, but it would not be. 'Now shal ye assay?' said sir Ector to Arthur. 'With a good wil,' said Arthur, and pulled it out easily. And therewithal sir Ector kneeled downe to the earth, and sir Key also. 'Alas!' said Arthur, 'mine owne deare father and my brother, why kneele you to me?' 'Nay, nay, my lord Arthur, it is not so, I was never your father ne of your blood, but I wote weH that you are of an higher blood then I wende you were.' And then sir Ector told him all, how he was betaken him to nourish, and by whose commandement, and by Merlins deliverance. Then Arthur made great mone when hee understood that sir Ector was not his father. 'Sir,' said sir Ector unto Arthur, 'will you bee my good and gracious lord when you are king?' 'Else were I too blame,' said Arthur, 'for you are the man in the world, that I am most beholding unto, and my good lady and mother your wife that as well as her owne hath fostred and kept me; and if ever it bee Gods will that I be king, as you say, yee shall

¹ *Mastery*.—This word was formerly used for skill or perfection in any art or science. Arthur means here to say that it wanted no great skill to perform this task.

'desire of mee what I may doe, and I shall not faile you; God forbid I should faile you.' 'Sir,' said sir Ector, 'I will aske no more of you but that you will make my sonne, your fostred brother sir Key, seneshall¹ of all your lands.' 'That shall be done, sir,' said Arthur, 'and more by the faith of my body; and that never man shall have that office but hee while that hee and I live.' Therewithal they went unto the archbishop, and told him how the sword was achieved. And upon the twelfth day all the barons came thither for to assaie to take the sword, who that would assaye. But there afore them al, there might none take it out but onely Arthur; wherefore there were many great lords wroth, and said, 'It was great shame unto them all and the realme to bee governed with a boy of no high blood borne.' And so they fell out at that time, that it was put off till Candlemasse. And at Candlemasse many more great lords came thither for to have wonne the sword, but none of them might prevaile. And agayne Arthur pulled out the sword easily, whereof the barons were sore agrieved, and put it in delay till the high feast of Ester. And as Arthur sped afore, so did hee at Ester; and yet there were some of the great lords had indignation that Arthur should be their king, and put it off in delay till the feast of Penticost. Then the archbishop of Canterbury, by Merlins providence, let purvey such knights as king Utherpendragon loved best and most trusted in his dayes, and such knights were put about Arthur, as sir Bawdewine of Britaine, sir Key, sir Ulfius, and sir Brastias; all these with many other were alwayes about Arthur day and night till the feast of Penticost.

CHAP. V.—*How Arthur was crowned king, and how he made officers.*

AND at the feast of Penticost, all manner of men assayed for to pull at the sword that would assaye; and none might prevaile, but Arthur pulled it out afore all the lords and comons that were there, wherefore all the comons cryed at once: 'We will have Arthur unto our king, we will put him no more in delay; for wee all see that it is Gods will that hee shall bee our king, and who that holdeth against it we will slay him.' And so anone was the coronation made, and there was hee sworne to the lords and commons for to be a true king. When this was done then Arthur did make sir Key seneshall of England, and sir Bawdewine of Britayne was made constable, and sir Ulfius was made chamberline, and sir Brastias was made warden for to waite upon the north fro Trent forward, for it was that time as for the most part enemie unto the king.

¹ *Seneshall*.—The seneschal, or steward, was one of the highest and most influential offices about the king's person.

CHAP. VI.—*How king Arthur held in Wales at a Pentecost a great feast, and what kings and lords came to this feast.*

THEN King Arthur removed into Wales, and let crie a great feast that it should be holden at Pentecost after the coronation of him at the cite of Carlion¹. Unto this feast came king Lot of Lowthean and of Orkeney, with five hundred knights²; and king Urience of Gore, with foure hundred knights; and king Nentres of Garlothe, with seven hundred knights; and the king of Scotland, with six hundred knights, and hee was but a yong man; and a king that was called the king with the hundred knights³; but hee and his men was passing well beeseene at all points; and the king of Cardos with five hundred knights. Then was king Arthur glad of their coming wherefore the king sent unto the kings and knights great presents. But the kings said they had no joy to receive gifts of a berdles boy⁴ that was come of low blood; and sent him word that they would have none of his gifts. With this answer the messengers departed, and told king Arthur. And for this cause, hee tooke him to a strong toure⁵ with five hundred good men of armes with him: and all the kings aforesaid in a manner laid a seige afore him, but king Arthur was well vitaled. And within fifteene dayes after Merlin came among them into the cite of Carlion. Then all the kings were passing glad of Merlins comming, and asked him, 'For what cause is that berdles boy Arthur made your king?' 'Sirs,' said Merlin, 'I shall tell you the cause. For hee is king Utherpendragons sonne, and who soever saieyth nay, he shall bee king and overcome all his enemies, and or that hee die hee shall be long king of all England, and he shall have under his obeysance Wales, Ireland, and Scotland, and many moc realmes then I wil now reherse.' Some of the kings had mervaille of Merlins words, and deemed well that it should be as he said; and some of them laughed him to scorne, as king Lot, and moe other called him a witch.

¹ *Carlion*.—Caerleon-uper-Usk, the Isca Silurum of the Romans, the extensive ruins of which were celebrated at the period of the composition of these romances. See the description of them by Giraldus Cambrensis. It was imagined to be the chief city of Arthur and the legendary British kings of his age.

² *Five hundred knights*.—The reader must bear in mind that, as each knight had to appear in the field with a certain number of followers, equally on horseback and armed, this number of knights answers to a considerable force of men.

³ *The king with the hundred knights*.—This king is called, in the English metrical life of Merlin, *Agrugines*.

⁴ *Boy*.—This word was formerly used as a word of contempt or reproach. Below, Caxton's texts reads, for *that berdles boy*, simply *that boye Arthur*.

⁵ *A strong toure*.—Giraldus speaks of the ruins of an imposing tower at Caerleon, which may perhaps have given the idea of this tower to the romance writer.

CHAP. VII.—*Of the first warre that king Arthur had, and how he wanne the field and overcame his enemies.*

‘**W**HAT wil ye doe?’ said Merlin to the kings; ‘yee are better to stint¹, for here ye shal not prevaile, though ye were ten times so many.’ ‘Be we wel advised to bee afraid of a dreame-reader²?’ said king Lot. With that Merlin vanished away, and came to king Arthur, and bad him set on them fierly; and in the meane while there were three hundred good men, of the best that were with the kings, that went straight to king Arthur, and that comforted him greatly. ‘Sir,’ said Merlin to king Arthur, ‘fight not with the sword that you had by miracle till you see that you goe to the worst, then draw it out and doe your best.’ So forthwithall king Arthur set upon them in their lodging. Then king Lot and the king with the hundred knights and king Carados³, set on king Arthur fierly behind him. With that king Arthur turned with his knights and smote behind and before till his horse was slaine under him. And therewith king Lot smote downe king Arthur. With that his knights received him, and set him on horseback. Then hee drew his sword Excalibar⁴; but it was so bright that it gave light like thirtie torches, and therewith hee put them backe, and slew much people; but all the kings held them together with the knights that were left alive, and so fled and departed. And Merlin came to king Arthur, and counsailed him to follow them no farther.

CHAP. VIII.—*How Merlin counsailed king Arthur to send for king Ban and king Bors, and of their counsaile taken for the warre.*

SO after the feast and journey, king Arthur drew him to London, and let call his barons to counsaile. For Merlin had told the king that sixe knights that made warre upon him would in all hast bee avenged on him. Wherefore the king asked counsaile of them all. ‘I shall tell you, sirs,’ said Merlin, ‘I warn you all that your enemies are passing strong for you,

¹ *To stint*.—To cease or stop.

² *Dreame-reader*. An interpreter of dreams. A profession of great importance in the Middle Ages.

³ *King Carados*.—He is called in the English metrical romance king of Strangore. But the same romance, a little further on, calls Brangores king of Strangore.

⁴ *Excalibar*.—*Excalibur*, Caxton. This is the first, and rather abrupt, mention in this book of king Arthur’s celebrated sword, which appears here to be identified with the miraculous sword he drew from the anvil on the stone, in consequence of which he was made king. The French romance of Merlin gives the following interpretation of the name,—‘*Éscalibort est un nom Ebrieu, qui vault autant à dire en François comme très cher fer et acier, et aussi disoyent-il vrai.*’ According to the English metrical romance of Merlin this celebrated sword bore the following inscription:—

Ich am y-hote Escalibore;
Unto a king fair tresore.

And it is added in explanation,

On Inglis is this writing,
‘Kerve steel and yren and al thing.’

and by this time they have gotten foure kings more, and a mighty duke also. I shall tel you mine advise; there are two brethren beyond the sea, and they be kings both, and marvelous good men of their hands; the one hight king Ban of Benwicke and that other hight king Bors of Gaule¹, that is France; and on these two kings warreth a mighty man of men, king Claudas², and striveth with them for a castle; wherefore this is my counsaile, that our king send unto the two kings, Ban and Bors, by two trusty knights, with letters well devised, if that they will come and see king Arthur and his court, and so helpe him in his warres, that hee will bee sworne to them to helpe them in their warres against king Claudas.' Right so in all the haste were ordained to goe two knights upon the message unto the two kings. So were there made letters in most pleasant wise, according unto king Arthurs desire. Ulfus and Brastias were made the messengers, and so passed the sea, and rode towards the citie of Benwicke, and there besides were eight knights that espied them. And at the straight passage³ they mette with sir Ulfus and sir Brastias, and would have taken them prisoners. So they prayed them that they might passe, for they were messengers unto king Ban and Bors sent from king Arthur. 'Therefore,' said the eight knights, 'yee shall die or bee our prisoners, for wee be knights of king Claudas.' And therewith two of them dressed their speares, and Ulfus and Brastias dressed their speares, and ran together with great strength, and Claudas knights brake their speares and the other two held, and bare the two knights out of their sadels unto the earth, and so left them lying and rode their way. And the other sixe knights rode afore to a passage to meete with them againe, and so Ulfus and Brastias smote other two downe, and so past on their way.

And at the third passage smote downe other two. And at the fourth passage there met two for two, and both were laid to the earth. So there was none of the eight knights but that he was sore hurt or els brused. And when they came to Benwicke there were sent to them two knights of worship, the one hight Lyonses, lord of the countrie of Payarne⁴, and sir Phariance, a worshipful knight. Anone when kings Ban and Bors understood the letters they gave answer, that they would fulfil the desire of king Arthur and come to him with all the speede they might. So the two knights passed the sea, and came to their lord, and told him how they had sped, whereof king Arthur

¹ *Ban—Bors.*—These are called in the versions of the romance of Merlin, Ban, king of Benoit, in 'Lesser Britany,' and Bohort, king of Gannes (perhaps Vannes). The former place is, of course, what our romance calls *Benwicke*.

² *King Claudas.*—King Claudas of Gaul appears first in the early French prose romance of Merlin by Walter Map, or Mapes. He makes a conspicuous figure in the romance of Sir Launcelot. He is always spoken of as the 'tyrant' of Gaul.

³ Caxton's text has *at a strayt passage*.

⁴ *Payarne.* It would be in vain to attempt to identify this and many other names of places in this romance.

was passing glad. Then the king let purvye for a great feast, and let crie a great justes. And by all holowmasse, the two kings were comen over the sea, with three hundred knights well arayed both for peace and for warre. And king Arthur met with them ten miles out of London; and on all halowmasse, at the great feast, sate in the hal the three kings. And anone, as they had washed and were risen, all knights that would just made them ready. By than¹ they were ready on horseback there were seven hundred knights. And kings Arthur, Ban, and Bors, with the archbishop of Canterbury, and sir Ector, Kay's father, were in a place covered with cloth of gold, like an hall, with ladies and gentlewomen, for to behold who did best, and thereon to give judgement.

CHAP. IX.—*Of a great turney made by king Arthur and the two kings Ban and Bors, and how they went over the sea.*

KING Arthur and the two kings let depart the seven hundred knights in two parties. And there were three hundred knights of the realme of Benwicke, and they of Gaule turned on the other side. So sir Griflet met with a knight that was called Ladynas, and they met so egerly that al men had wonder, and they fought so that horse and men fell to the earth, and lay so long, that al men wend that they had beene dead. And when Lucas the butler saw Griflet lie so, hee quickly horsed him againe; and they two did marvailous deedes of armes with many batchelers: and sir Key did that day marvelous deedes of arms. Then there came in fiersly sir Ladinas and sir Grastian, two knights of France, and did passing well, that all men praysed them. Then came there sir Placidas, a good knight, and mette with sir Key and smote him downe horse and man; wherefore sir Griflet was wroth, and mette with sir Placidas so hard that horse and man fel to the earth. When King Arthur and the two kings saw them begin to waxe wroth on both parts, they lepte on small hacknyes² and let crie that al men should depart unto their lodging. And so they went home and unarmed them; and so to even-song³ and supper. And on the morrow they heard masse, and after went to dinner⁴, and so to their counsaile. At the last they were concluded, that Merlin should goe with a token of king Ban, and that was a ring, unto his men and king Bors, and Gracian and Placidas

¹ *By than*.—By the time that. An old Anglo-Saxon form.

² *Hacknyes*.—The hackney (*haquenée*) was a small kind of horse reserved especially for the use of ladies. When the king and his two knights mounted on such horses, it was an unmistakable intimation of his wish to put a stop to all military exercises.

³ *Even-song*.—Even-song, or Vespers, began at four o'clock in the afternoon.

⁴ *To dinner*.—The dinner was formerly an early meal. At no great distance of time the dinner hour was ten o'clock in the forenoon.

should goe againe and keepe their castles and their countries,* and so passed the sea and came to Benwicke. And when the people saw king Bans ring, and Gracian and Placidas, they were glad, and according unto their soveraigne lords desire, the men of warre made them readie, so that they had fiteene thousand on horseback and on foot, and they had great plenty of victuall with them by Merlins provision. But Gracian and Placidas were left to furnish and garnish the castles for dread of king Claudas. And when Merlin came to the sea, he sent home the foote men againe, and tooke no more with him but ten thousand men on horsebacke, the most part men of armes; and so shipped, and landed at Dover; and hee led the hoost northward the previest way that could be thought unto the forrest of Bedgraine¹, and there in a valey he lodged them secretly. Then rode Merlin unto King Arthur and the two kings, and told them how he had sped, whereof they had great marvaile, that man on earth might speede so soone, and goe and come. So Merlin told them that ten thousand were in the forrest of Bedgraine, wel armed at al points. Then was there no more to say but to horsebacke went all the hoost, as king Arthur had afore purveyed. So with twenty thousand he passed by night and day.

CHAP. X.—*How eleaven kings gathered a great hoast against king Arthur.*

AND so within a little space the three kings came unto the castle of Bedgraine, and found there a passing faire fellowship and well beseene. This was the cause of the northern hoast that they were reared for the despite and rebuke that the six kings had at Carlion. And those six kings gate to them five other kings, and thus they began to gather their people, and they swore that they should not leave each other til they had destroyed king Arthur. And then they made an oath. The first that began the oath was the duke of Candebenet, that hee would bring with him five thousand men of armes which were ready on horseback. Then swore king Clarience of Northumberland that he would bring three thousand men of armes. Then swore the king of the hundred knights, that was a passing good man and a young, that hee would bring foure thousand men of armes. Also there swore king Urience, that was sir Uwayns father, of the land of Gore that he would bring sixe thousand men of arms. Besides these kings there were king Brandegoris, of Latangor², king Lot, a passing good knight, and

¹ *Forest of Bedgraine.*—I cannot at all identify this forest. The English romance of Merlin has Rockingham, both for the forest and for the castle mentioned subsequently; but a little further on (see p. 77) it seems to be identified with Sherwood.

² *Latangor.*—Caxton has Brandegoris of Strangore.

•sir Gwynas¹ father; king Idres of Cornewaile, king Cradelmans; king Agwisance; king Nentres; and king Carados: and each of these kings swore to bring five thousand men of arms. So their whole hoost was of cleane men of armes on horsebacke fifty and three thousand. And on foote ten thousand of good mens bodies. Then were they soone redie and mounted upon horse, and sent forth their fore-riders; and so they departed and drew toward Arthur.

CHAP. XI.—*Of a dreame of the king with the hundred knights.*

AND there were sent fore-riders to skum² the countrie, and there³ met with the fore-riders of the north, and made them to tell which way the hoost came; and king Arthur let bren and destroyed all the countrie afore them where they should ride. The king with the hundred knights dreamed a wonderfull dreame two nights afore the battaile, that there blew a great wind, and blew downe their castles and their townes, and after that came a water and bare it al away. Al that heard of the dreame said it was a token of great battaile. Then by the counsaile of Merlin, when they wist which way the eleaven kings would ride and lodge that night, at midnight they set upon them as they were in their pavilions; but the scoute watch by their hoost cried, 'Lords, at armes⁴! for heere be your enemies at your hand.

CHAP. XII.—*How that the eleaven kings with their hoast fought against king Arthur and his hoast, and of many great feates of the warre.*

THEN king Arthur, and king Ban, and king Bors, with their good and trustie knights, set upon them so fiersly, that they made them overthrow their pavilions on their heads; but the eleaven kings by manly prowesse of armes tooke a faire field. But there was slaine that morrow tide ten thousand of good mens bodies. Then it drew toward day. 'Now shall you doe by mine advise,' said Merlin unto the three kings. 'I would that king Ban and king Bors, with ten thousand men, were put here besides in an embushement and when the eleaven kings see you have but twenty thousand, they will bee the gladder to suffer you and your hoast to come over the passage.' All the three kings and the barons said that Merlin had said passing well, and it was done as hee had devised. Then to Ulfus and Brastias were delivered three thousand men of armes, and they

¹ *Sir Gwynas*.—In Caxton's text it is more correctly given Sir Gawayns.

² *Skum*.—Caxton, *skumme*. To skim, to sweep.

³ *There*.—Caxton, *they*.

⁴ *At armes*.—The translation, no doubt, of the French *aux armes*! i.e. arm yourselves, take to your arms.

set on them fiersly in the passage, that it was wonderfull to tell. When the eleaven kings saw that there was so few a fellowship and did such deedes of armes, they set on them fiersly againe; and there was sir Ulfius horse slaine under him, but he did well and marvelously on foote. But the duke Eustace of Cambenet, and king Clariance of Northumberland, were alway grievous on sir Ulfius. Then waxed the meddle¹ passing hard on both parties.

CHAP. XIII. — *Yet of the same battaile.*

THEN when king Arthur saw the battaile would not be ended by no manner hee stinted not till hee had slaine twenty knights. Also hee wounded king Lot sore on the shoulder, and made him to leve that ground, for sir Kay and sir Grislet did there, with king Arthur, great deedes of armes. Then king Lot made great moane for his domages and his fellowes, and said unto the eleaven kings, 'Let me have the king with the hundred knights, king Agwisanee, king Idres, and the duke of Cambenet², and we five kings will have fiteene thousand men of armes with us; and wee will goe apart while yee sixe kings hold the meddle with twelve thousand, and as we see that yee have foughten with them long, then will we come on fiersly.' So anone they departed as they had devised. In the meane while brake the embushment of kings Ban and Bors, and Lionses and Phariaunce had the vant-guard, and the two kings met with king Idres and his fellowship, and there began a great meddle of breaking of speares and smiting of swords, and king Idres was nere at discomfiture. That saw Agwisanee the king, and put Lyonses and Phariaunce in point of death, for the duke of Cambenet came on them with a great fellowship. So these two knights were in great danger of their lives that they were faine to returne. When king Bors saw those knights put backe he came on so fast this his fellowship seemed as blacke as the men of Inde³. When king Lot had espied king Bors, hee knew him well, then he said: 'I see yonder a king, one of the most worshipfullest men and one of the best knights of the world, is joyned to his fellowship.' 'What is he?' said the king with the hundred knights. 'It is⁴,' said king Lot, 'king Bors of Gaule; I marvaile how they com into this cuntry without wetting of us all.'

¹ *Meddle*.—The battle; mêlée.

² *Cambenet*.—Caxton reads *Canbenec*.

³ *As blak as Inde*, Caxton. *Inde* was the name of a colour, a very dark blue.

⁴ *It is*.—It may perhaps be well to explain, for the benefit of the general reader, that, in the later feudal age, king Bors would be known by his coat of arms, blazoned on his shield. This was the great object of armorial bearings; and it was an important branch of the education of a knight to know people by their arms. They could not be known by their faces, as these were covered by the helmet.

CHAP. XIV.—*Yet more of the said battaile, and how it was ended by Merlin.*

BY then came into the field king Ban as a fierce lion, with bandes of grene, and thereupon gold. 'Ha, ha,' said king Lot, 'yonder I se the most valiant knight of the world; for such two brethren as is king Ban and king Bors are not living, wherefore we must needs void or die; and but we avoid manly and wisely ther is but death.' When king Ban came into the battle, he came in so fiersly, that the strok redounded againe fro the wood and the water; wherefore king Lot wept for pittie and sorrow, that he saw so many good knights take their end. But through the great force of king Ban they made both the northern batailes that were departed to hurtle¹ together for great dread; and the three kings with their knights slew downe right, that it was pitie to behold, and a great multitude fled.

And so king Arthur, and king Ban, and king Bors, made their knights a litte² to withdraw them. But alwayes the eleaven kings with their chivalrie never turned backe; and so withdrew them to a little wood, and so over a little river, and there they rested them, for on the night they might have no rest in the field. And then the eleaven kings and their knights assembled them all on an heape together, as men adread and all discomforted. But there was no man might passe them, they held them so hard together, that king Arthur had marvaile of their great deedes of armes, and was passing wroth. Then all the eleaven kings drew them together, and then said king Lot: 'Lords, yee must take other wayes then you doe, or els the great losse is behinde; yee may see what people we have lost, and what good men wee leese, because alwayes we waite upon those foote men, and ever in saving one of the foote men wee leese tenne horsemen for him, therefore this is mine advise, let us put our foote men fro us, for it is almost night. And when we horseman be together, looke that everyche³ of you kings make such an ordinance that none breake upon paine of death. And who that seeth any man dresse him for to flee, lightly that he be slaine, for it is better that we slay a coward, then through a coward all we be slaine.' And they swore that they would never faile the one unto the other, neither for life nor for death.—And who that fled, but did as they did, should be slaine. Then anone they tooke new speares, and set them on their thighs, and stood stil as it had beene a plompe⁴ of wood.

¹ *Hurtle*.—To rush together in a crowd.

² *Litte*, more usually written *lite*, a little.

³ *Everyche*.—Every one, each.

⁴ *Plompe*.—A clump of trees is still called a *plump* in the dialects of the north of England.

CHAP. XV.—*Yet of the said battayle.*

WHAN kinge Arthur, and kynge Ban, and kinge Bors behelde them and all their knyghts, they praised them greatly for their noble cheere of chyvalry, for the hardyest fyghters that ever they heard or sawe. With that there dressed them a fortie noble knyghtes, and sayd unto the three kings that they would breake theyr batayle. All these fortie knyghtes rode on afore: and the eleaven kinges, with part of their good knyghtes, rushed with their horses as fast as they might with theyr speres, and there they did on both parties mervaylous deedes of armes. So came into the thickest of the presse kinge Arthur, Ban, and Bors, and slewe downe ryght on both handes. With that came Merlyn upon a great black horse, and sayde to king Arthur, 'Ye have never done; have ye not done ynough? of three score thousand ye have left on lyve but fiteene thousand; it is tyme for to saye ho¹, for God is wrothe wyth you that you wyll never have done, and therefore withdrawe you to your lodginge. I dare undertake they shall not hurt ne greeve you, for three yeres, and by than ye shall here newe tydings.' And than Merlyn said to king Arthur, 'These elcaven kinges have more in hand than they are ware of, for the Sarasyns are landed in their countries more than fortie thousand that brenne and sley, and have layde seyge at the castell Wandsbrought²; therefore dreade ye not these three years. Also, sir, all the goods that ye have gotten at this battaile let it be searched, and when ye have it in your handes, let it be given freely to these two kinges that be here, Ban and Bors, that they may reward their knyghtes withall. Also ye be able ynough to reward your owne knyghts of your owne goods when so ever it lyketh you.' 'It is well sayde,' quod king Arthur, 'and as thou hast devised so shall it be done.' Whan it was delivered to kinge Ban and king Bors, they gave the goodes as freely to their knyghts as it was given them.

Than Merlyn tooke his leave of king Arthur and of the two kinges, for to goe see his master Bleise³ which dwelt in Northumberland; and there he told him how kinge Arthur and the two kinges had sped at the great battayle; and Bleyse wrote the battayle word by worde as Merlyn tolde him. All

¹ *Ho*.—This was the formal exclamation used by the king or umpire of a tournament to command the combatants to cease.

² *Wandsbrought*.—Caxton, *Wandesborow*. Perhaps this is the ancient camp of Vandlebury, on the Gogmagog hills, near Cambridge, concerning which a legend is related by Gervase of Tilbury. There is, however, a Wanborough in Wiltshire.

³ *His master Bleise*—Blaise, according to the legend of Merlin, was a holy hermit who had protected the mother of Merlin from the fiend, and had undertaken his education after he was born. It is pretended that Merlin afterwards employed Blaise as his historiographer, and communicated to him, as they occurred, the events in which he took a part, or which he witnessed.

the batayles that were done in king Arthurs dayes Merlyn caused Bleyse his master to write them. After this Merlyn departed from his master and came to kinge Arthur that was in the castell of Bedegraine, that was one of the castels that stood in the forrest of Sherwood, and Merlyn was so disguysed that king Arthur knewe him not. 'Syr,' sayde Merlyn to king Arthur, 'will yee give mee a gift?' 'Wherefore,' sayde the king, 'should I give thee a gift, thou chorle?' 'Syr,' sayde Merlyn, 'yee were better to give mee a gyft, the which is not in your hands, than to leese great riches. For here in the same place where as the great battayle was, is great treasure hid in the earth.' 'Who told thee so, chorle?' sayd king Arthur. 'Merlyn told me so,' saide he.

Than Ulfius and Brastias knew him well ynough, and smiled at him. 'Syr,' sayde these two knightes, 'it is Merlyn that speaketh so unto you.' Than king Arthur was greatly abasshed, and had mervaille of Merlyn, and so had king Ban and king Bors, and so they had great sport at him. Than there came word that kinge Ryence of North Wales made strong warre upon king Leodegraunce of Camelyarde¹. For the which thinge kinge Arthur was wrothe, for hee loved him well and hated king Ryence, because hee was alwayes agaynst him.

CHAP. XVI.—*How king Arthur, king Ban, and king Bors reschewed king Leodegraunce, and of other incidents.*

THEN king Arthur, and king Ban, and king Bors departed with their fellowship, about twentie thousand, and came within six dayes into the countrie of Camelyard, and there reschewed king Leodegraunce, and slewe there much people of king Ryence, unto the number of ten thousand of men, and put him to flight. And there had king Arthur the first sight of Guenever², daughter unto king Leodegraunce, and ever after he loved hir. And afterward they were wedded, as it shall be shewed hereafter. So these two kings tooke their leave to go into their owne countrie, for king Claudas did great distruction on both their landes. Than said king Arthur, 'I will goe with you.' 'Nay,' sayde the two kings, 'yee shall not at this time, for yee have yet much to doe in these lands; therefore wee will depart, and with the great goods that we have gotten in these landes by your gyfts, we shall wage many good knyghts, and withstand the malyce of king Claudas,

¹ *Camelyarde*.—Cameliard is apparently the district called *Carmelide* in the English metrical romance of Merlin, on the border of which was a town called Breckenho (? Brecknock). Further on in the same poem the capital of Carmelide is said to be Carohaise.

² *Guenever*.—Geoffrey of Monmouth, the head of all these legends, calls the lady Guanhumara, and tells us that she was of a noble Roman family, and the most beautiful woman in the whole island. Her unfaithfulness to her illustrious husband is well known to every reader, and was proverbial in the later Middle Ages.

for, by the grace of God, if wee have need, we will send to you for succour. And if yee have need, send for us, and we will not tarry, by the faith of our bodies.' 'It shall not need,' said Merlyn, 'that these two kings come againe in the way of warre, but I know well that the noble king Arthur may not be long from you, for or twelve moneths¹ be past ye shall have great need of him, and than he shall revenge you on your enemies, as ye have revenged him on his. For these eleaven kings shall dye all in one day, by the great might and prowesse of armes of two valiant knights; their names ben Balyn le Savage and Balan his brother.'

Nowe the eleaven kings returned to a city that hyght Sorhaute, which city was wythin king Uryence land. With that there came a messenger and told them that there was comen into their lands Sarasins fortie thousand, that have brent and slayne all the people that they may come by without mercy, and have layd seige unto the castel of Vandesborough. So they consented to keepe all the marches of Cornewayle, of Wales, and of the north. So first they put king Idres in the city of Nautes in Brytayne, with foure thousand men of armes. Also they put in the city of Windesan king Nentres of Garlot, with foure thousand knights.

Also they had of other men of warre more than eight thousand, for to fortify all the fortresses in the marches of Cornewayle. Also they put moe knyghtes in all the marches of Wales and of Scotland, with many good men of armes. And so they kept them together the space of three yere, and ever alyed them with mighty kings, dukes, lords, and gentlemen.

CHAP. XVII.—*How king Arthur rode to Carlyon, and of his dreame, and how he sawe the questing beast.*

THEN after that king Ban and king Bors were departed, king Arthur rode unto Carlyon, and thither came to him Lots wyfe of Orkeny in manner of a messenger, but shee was sent thither to espye the court of king Arthur, and she came richly beseeene with hir foure sonnes, Gawayne, Gaherys, Agravayne, and Gareth, with many other knights and ladies, and she was a passing fayre lady, wherefore there was great love between her and king Arthur: and she was king Arthurs sister on the mothers side Igrayne. So there shee rested her a month, and at the last she departed. But all this time king Arthur knewe not that king Lots wife was his sister. Then king Arthur had a marvaylous dreame. Him thought that there was comen into this lande many gryffions² and serpents,

¹ *Twelve months.*—Caxton reads, *within a yere or two.*

² *Gryffons.*—Flying dragons.

and him thought¹ that they brent and slew all the people in the land, and then him thought that he fought with them, and that they did him passing great damage and wounded him full sore, but at the last hee slewe them all. Whan the king awoke, hee was passing heavy and right pensive of his dreame. And so for to put away al these thoughts, hee made him ready with many knights to ryde on hunting. As soone as hee was in the forest, the king saw a great hart afore him. 'This hart will I chace,' said King Arthur; and so he spurred his horse and rode long after. The king sat him down by a fountaine, and there he fel in great thoughts, and as he sat there alone, him thought he heard a noise of hounds to the number of thirtie. And with that the king saw comming toward him the strangest beast that ever he saw or heard tell of; so the beast went to the fountaine and dranke, and there was a noise like unto the questyn² of thirtie couple of hounds, and therewith the beast departed with a great noyse, whereof the king had great mervaile. Right so there came a knight on foote to king Arthur, and said, 'Knight, full of thought and sleepy, tel me if thou sawest a strange beast passe this way?' 'Such one saw I,' said king Arthur unto the knight, 'that is past two miles. What would you with that beast?' 'Sir, I have followed that beast long time, and have killed my horse, so would God I had another to follow my quest.' Right so came one with the kings horse, and when the knight saw the horse hee prayed the king to give him that horse,—'For I have followed this quest these twelve monethes, and either I shall acheave him or bleede of the best blood of my body.' King Pellinore that time followed the questing beast, and after his death sir Palomides followed it.

CHAP. XVIII.—*How king Pellinore tooke king Arthurs horse, and followed the questing beast, and how Merlin met with king Arthur.*

'SIR knight,' said king Arthur, 'leave that quest and suffer mee to have it, and I will follow it other twelve moneths.' 'Ah, foole,' said the knight to king Arthur, 'thy desire is in vaine, for it shall never be acheaved but by me, or by my next kynne.' Therewith he stert to the kings horse and mounted into the saddle, and said, 'Gramercy, this horse is mine.' 'Well,' said king Arthur, 'thou maist take my horse by force, but and I might prove thee whether thou wert better on horse-back or I, I would be content.' 'Well,' said the knight, 'seeke me here when thou wilt, and here nigh this well thou shalt find

¹ *Him thought*.—It seemed to him. The verb *thinke* had two senses in old English—to think and to seem.

² *Questyn*.—To *queste*, in the language of hunting, means to give tongue as hounds when on the scent of game.

me,' and so passed forth on his way. Then sat king Arthur in a great study, and bad his men fetch his horse as fast as ever they might. Right so came Merlin like a child of foureteene yeeres of age, and saluted the king, and asked him why he was so pensive and heavy. 'I may well be pensive and heavy,' said the king, 'for here even now I have seene the most marvailous sight that ever I saw.' 'That knowe I well,' said Merlin, 'as well as thy selfe, and of all thy thoughts; but thou art but a foole to take thought, for it will not amend thee. Also I know what thou art, and king Utherpendragon was thy father, and thy mother is Igraine.' So Merlin departed, and came againe in the likenesse of an old man of foure score yeeres of age. Then said the old man, 'why are you so sad?' 'I may wel be heavy,' said king Arthur, 'for divers things; also here was a child and told me many things that me seemeth he should not know, for he was not of age for to know my father.' 'Yes,' said that old man, 'the child told you the truth, and more would hee have told you and you would have suffered him. He would have told you that your sister would have a son who will destroy you and all the knights of your realme. I am Merlin, and I was hee in the childs likenesse.' As they thus talked, came one with the kings horse¹, and so the king mounted on his horse and Merlin on another, and so rode to Carlion. And anon the king asked Ector and Ulfius who were his parents. And they told him that Utherpendragon was his father, and queene Igraine his mother. Then king Arthur said unto Merlin, 'I will that my mother be sent for that I may speake with her, and if shee say so her selfe, then will I belevee it.' In all hast the queene was sent for; and she came anon, and brought with her Morgan le Fay hir daughter, that was as faire a lady as any might be. And the king welcomed Igraine in the best manner.

CHAP. XIX. — *How Ulfius appeaches queene Igrayne, king Arthurs mother, of treason. And how a knight came and desired to have the death of his master revenged.*

RIGHT so came Ulfius, and said openly, that the king and all that were there might heare:—'My lord king Arthur, this queene Igraine is the falsest lady in the world, and the most traitresse. For the most part of your great lords, barons, and gentlemen of your realme knew never whose sonne ye were; and the queene should have made it knowne openly. Wherefore I prove her false to God and you, and to all your realme, and who will say the contrary, I will prove it upon his body.' Then spake Igraine, and said, 'I am a woman, and

¹ *Horse*.—Corrected from Caxton's text; the edition of 1634 has *horses*, in the plural.

may not fight; but rather then I should be dishonoured, there would some good man take my quarell. More,' she said, 'Merlin knoweth well, and you, sir Ulfius, how king Uther came to me in the castle of Tintagill, in the likenesse of my lord, that was dead three houres tofore. And after the thirteenth day king Uther wedded me, and by his commandement when the child was borne, it was delivered to Merlin, and nourished by him; and so I saw the child never after, nor wote not what is his name, for I never knew him yet.' Then Merlin tooke the king by the hand, saying, 'This is your mother.' And therewith sir Ector bare witness how he nourished him by king Uthers commandement. And therewith king Arthur tooke his mother, queene Igraine, in both his armes and kissed her, and either wept upon other. Then on a day there came into the court a squire on horsebacke, leading a knight before him wounded to the death by a knight in the forest that had reared up a pavilion by a well side; and the squire prayed that some good knight would revenge his masters death. Then came Griflet, that was but a squire¹, and he was but young, of the age of king Arthur, so he besought the king, for all his service that he had done, to give him the order of knighthood.

CHAP. XX.—*How Griflet was made knight, and how he justed with a knight.*

'THOU art full young,' said king Arthur, 'for to take so high an order upon thee.' 'Sir,' said Griflet, 'I beseech you to make me a knight.' So, at the desire of Griflet, the king made him knight.

'Now,' said king Arthur to sir Griflet, 'sithen that I have made thee knight, thou must graunt me a gift.' 'What ye will, my lord,' said sir Griflet. 'Thou shalt promise me, by the faith of thy body, that whan thou hast justed with the knight at the fountaine, ye shall come againe unto mee without any question or making any more debate.' 'I will promyse you,' said Griflet, 'as ye desire.' Then sir Griflet rode a great gallop² till he came to the fountaine, and thereby he saw a rich pavillion, and thereby under a cloth stood a fayre horse well sadled and bridleed, and on a tree a shielde of divers colours, and a great spere. Than sir Griflet smote upon the shielde with the end³ of his spere, that the shield fell downe to the ground. With that came the knight out of the pavilion, and said, 'Fayre knight, why smote ye downe my shield?' 'For I will just with you,' said sir Griflet. 'It were better ye did not,' said the knight, 'for ye are

¹ *But a squire.*—It is perhaps hardly necessary to remark that the position of squire was that of the young noble before he obtained the dignity of knighthood.

² *Gallop.*—Caxton has, *he rode a grete wallop.*

³ *End.*—Caxton has, *with the bott of his spere.*

but young and late made knight, and your might is nothing to mine.' 'As for that,' said sir Griflet, 'I will just with you.' 'That is mee loth : but of whence be ye?' said the knight. 'Sir, I am of king Arthurs court.' So they ran together that sir Griflets spere all to-shevered, and therewithall the knight smot sir Griflet through the shield and the left side, and brake his spere, that the tronchon stacke in his body, that horse and knight fell downe.

CHAP. XXI.—*How twelve knights came from Rome and asked truage of this land of king Arthur, and how king Arthur fought with a knight.*

WHEN the knight sawe him lye so on the ground, hee alighted and was passing heavy, for he wend he had slaine him, and than he unlaced his helme and gave him wind, and so with the tronchon he set him upon his horse and betooke him to God, and said he had a mighty heart, and if he might live he would prove a passing good knight. And so sir Griflet rode to the court, where as great mone was made for him; but through good leeches he was healed, and his life saved. Right so came in the court twenty¹ knights, and were aged men, and they came from the emperour of Rome, and asked of king Arthur truage² for this realme, or els the emperour would destroy him and his land. 'Well,' said king Arthur, 'yee are messengers, therefore may ye say what ye will, or els ye should die therfore. But this mine answer: I owe the emperour no truage, nor none will I send him; but upon a fayre field I shall give him my truage, that shall be with a sharpe spere, or els with a sharpe sward, and that shall be within these few dayes, by my fathers soule.' And therewith the messengers departed passingly wroth, and king Arthur was as wroth as they, for in an evill time came they then, for the king was passing wroth for the hurt of sir Griflet. Right so in the morning the king rode till he came to the fountaine, and the rich pavilion by it. Than king Arthur was ware where a knight sate all armed in a chayre. 'Sir knight,' said king Arthur, 'for what cause abidest thou heere? That there may no knyght ryde this way but if he do just with thee?' 'This custome,' said the knight, 'have I used and will use, maugre who saith nay; and who is grieved with my custome, let him amende it that will.' 'I will amend it,' said king Arthur. 'And I shall defend it,' said the knight. Anone he tooke his horse, and dressed his shield, and tooke a spere, and they met so hard either on others shield, that they all to-shevered their speres. Therewith king Arthur drew his swerde. 'Nay, not so,' said the knight, 'it is fayrer that we

¹ *Twenty*.—In Caxton it is twelve. Geoffrey of Monmouth, from which this part of the romance is taken, agrees with Caxton in the number of ambassadors.

² *Truage*.—Fealty.

twayne ren more together with sharpe speres.' 'I will well,' said king Arthur, 'and I had any mo speres.' 'I have speres ynough,' said the knight. Anon, there were brought two good speres, and every knight gate a spere, and therewith they ran together, that king Arthurs spere all to-shivered. But the knight hit him so hard in the middes of the shield, that horse and man fell to the earth, wherwith king Arthur was sore angred, and drew out his swerd, and said: 'I will assay thee, sir knight, on foot, for I have lost the honour on horsebacke.' So at the last they smote together, that both their swerds met even together. But the swerd of the knight smote king Arthurs swerd in two peeces. Than said the knight to the king: 'Thou art in my daunger¹, and but thou yeeld thee as overcome and recreaunt, thou shalt dye.' 'As for death,' said king Arthur, 'welcome be it when it commeth, but as to yeeld me to thee as recreaunt, I had lever die than to be so shamed.' And therewithall the king lept unto Pellynore, and tooke him by the middle, and threw him downe, and raced off his helme. When the knight felt that, hee was adread, for hee was a passing big man of might, and anone he brought king Arthur under him, and raced² off his helme, and would have smitten off his head.

CHAP. XXII.—*How Merlin saved king Arthurs life, and threw an enchauntment upon king Pellinor, and made him to fall on sleepe.*

THEREWITHALL Merlin cast an enchauntment on the knight, that he fell to the earth in a great sleepe. Then Merlin tooke up king Arthur, and rode forth upon the knights horse. 'Alas,' said king Arthur, 'hast thou slaine this good knight by thy craftes? there lived not so worshipfull a knight as hee was; I had lever than the stint³ of my land a yeare, than he were on live.' 'Care yee not,' said Merlin, 'he is but on sleepe, and will awake within three houres: and he shall doe you hereafter right good service, and his name is Pellinore, and he shal have two sonnes, that shal be passing good men, and save one, they shall have no fellow of prowesse and of good living; the one shall be named Percivale⁴ of Wales, and the other Lamerocke of Wales.'

CHAP. XXIII.—*How king Arthur, by the meanes of Merlin, gate his sword of Excalibur of the lady of the lake.*

RIGHT so the king and he departed, and went unto an hermitage where as was a good man and a great leache⁵. The king was there three dayes, and then were his wounds wel

¹ *In my daunger.*—The original meaning of *danger* was lordship or dominion; to be in danger of any one, meant to be in his power.

² *Raced.*—*Reaced of*, Caxton.

⁴ *Percivale.*—Caxton, *Persyval*.

³ *Stint.*—The loss.

⁵ *Leache.*—A physician.

amended that he might ride and goe. And so Merlin and he departed, and as they rode king Arthur said, 'I have no sword¹.' 'No force¹,' said Merlin, 'here by is a sword that shall be yours and I may.' So they rode til they came to a lake, and in the middes of the lake king Arthur was ware of an arme clothed in white samite², that held a faire sword³ in the hand. 'Lo,' said Merlin to the king, 'yonder is the sword that I spake of.' With that they saw a damosell going upon the lake. Therewith came the damosell to king Arthur and saluted him, and he her againe. 'Damosel,' said the king, 'what sword is that which the arme holdeth yonder above the water? I would it were mine, for I have no sword.' 'Sir king,' said the damosell of the lake, 'that sword is mine, and if yee will give me a gift when I aske it you, yee shal have it.' 'By my faith,' said king Arthur, 'I will give you any gift that you will aske or desire.' 'Well,' said the damosell, 'go ye into yonder barge, and rowe your selfe unto the sword, and take it and the scabbard with you, and I will aske my gift when I see my time.' So king Arthur and Merlin alighted, tyed their horses to two trees, and so they went into the barge. And when they came to the sword that the hand held, king Arthur tooke it up by the handles and tooke it with him; and the arme and the hand went under the water; and so king Arthur and Merlin came to the land and rode forth. Then king Arthur looked upon the sword, and liked it passing well. 'Whether liketh you better,' said Merlin, 'the sword or the scabbard?' 'Me liketh better the sword,' said king Arthur. 'Ye are more unwise,' said Merlin, 'for the scabbard is worth ten of the sword, for while ye have the scabbard upon you ye shall leese no blood be ye never so sore wounded, therefore keepe well the scabbard alway with you.' So they rode on to Carlion.

CHAP. XXIV.—*How tidings came to king Arthur that king Ryence had overcome eleaven kings, and how he desired king Arthurs beard to purfel his mantell.*

THE meane while came a messenger hastily from king Ryence⁴ of Northwales, and he was king of all Ireland, and of many iles; and this was his message, greeting wel king Arthur in this manner wise, saying, that king Ryence had disconfited and overcome eleaven kings, and everiche of them did him homage, and that was this, they gave him their beards cleane flayne of as much as there was; wherefore the messenger

¹ *No force*.—No matter.

² *Samite*.—A rich silk, often interwoven with gold or silver thread.

³ *Sword*. This, according to the title of the chapter, was the celebrated sword Excalibur, which our romance gives to Arthur at an earlier period. See p. 69.

⁴ *King Ryence*.—He is called in the English metrical romance of Merlin, Ryance king of Ireland. In other romances he is called king Ryon.

*came for king Arthurs beard, for king Rience had purfeled¹ a mantell with kings beards, and there lacked for one place of the mantell, wherefore he sent for his beard, or else hee would enter into his lands 'and brenn and sley, and never leave till he have thy head and thy beard.' 'Well,' said king Arthur, 'thou hast said thy message, which is the most villainous message that ever man heard sent to a king. Also thou mayest see my beard full young yet for to make a purfell of, but tell thou the king this. I owe him none homage, ne none of mine elders; but tell him I will have his head without he doe homage unto me.' Then the messenger departed. 'Now is there any heere,' said king Arthur, 'that knoweth king Ryence?' Then answered a knight that hight Naram: 'Sir, I know him well, hee is a passing good man of his body as few beene living, and a passing proude man, and, sir, doubt yee not hee will make warr on you with a mighty puissance.' 'Well,' said king Arthur to the knight, 'I shall ordayne for him, and that shall he finde.'

CHAP. XXV.—*How all the children were sent for that were borne upon May day, and how Mordred was saved.*

THEN king Arthur let send for all the children² that were borne on May day. For Merlin told king Arthur that he that should destroy him should be borne on May day, wherefore he sent for them al upon paine of death. And so there were found many lords sons, and all were sent unto the king, and so was Mordred sent by king Lots wife, and all were put in a shippe to the sea. And so by fortune the shippe drove unto a castle, and was al to-riven and destroyed the most part, save that Mordred was cast up, and a good man found him, and nourished him til he was foureteene yeeeres old, and then he brought him to the court, as it is rehearsed afterward, toward the end, of the death of king Arthur. So many lords and barons of this realme were sore displeased, because that their children wer so lost, and many put it on the wit³ of Merlin more then on king Arthur.

CHAP. XXVI.—*Of a damosel which came gyrd with a sword for to finde a man of such vertue to draw it out of the scabbard.*

SO it befel upon a time when king Arthur was at London, there came a knight that brought the king tydings how that king Ryence of Northwales had reared⁴ a great number of

¹ *Purfeled*.—Trimmed, or hemmed.

² *All the children*.—The idea of this incident is evidently taken from that of the murder of the innocents in the New Testament.

³ *Wit*.—The printer of the edition of 1634 has mistaken Caxton's text, which here reads, *and many put the wyte on Merlyn*, i.e. many threw the blame on Merlin.

⁴ *Reared*.—i.e. raised.

people, and were entred into the land, and brent and slew the kings true liege people. Then king Arthur let make a crie, that all the lords, knightes, and gentlemen of armes should draw unto a castle that was called in those days Camelot¹, and there the king would let make a counsaile generall, and a great justes. So when the king was comen thither, there came a damosell which was sent on message from the great lady Lyle of Avelyon². And when she came before king Arthur she let her mantle fall that was richly fured, and was girded with a noble sword, wherof the king had great marvaile and said: 'Damosell, for what cause are ye gird with that sword? it beseemeth you not.' 'Now shall I tell you,' said the damosell; 'I may not be delivered of this sword but by a good knight, and hee must be a passing good man of his hands and of his deedes, and without vilany or trechery; if I may finde such a knight that hath all these vertues, he may draw out this sword of the scabbard. For I have beene at king Ryence, and he and al his knights have assayed it, and none can speede.'

'This is a great mervaile,' said king Arthur; 'and it be soothe, I will my selfe assay to draw out the sword, not presuming upon my selfe that I am the best knight, but that I will beginne to draw at your sword, in giving example to al the barons, that they shall assay every one after other when I have assayed.' Then king Arthur took the sword by the scabard and by the girdel and pulled at it egerly, but the sword would not out. Most of all the barons of the round table that were there at that time assayed all by rowe³; but none might speede, wherefore the damosel made great sorrow out of measure, and said: 'Alas! I wend in this court had beene the best knights without trechery or treason.' 'By my faith,' said king Arthur, 'heere are good knights as I deeme any beene in the world, but their grace is not to helpe you, wherefore I am greatly displeased.'

CHAP. XXVII.—*How Balin, arayed like a poore man, pulled out the sword, which afterwards was cause of his death.*

IT happened so, at that time there was a poore knight with king Arthur, that had beene prisoner with him halfe a yeare and more, for sleying of a knight which was cossen to king Arthur. This knight was named Balin le Savage, and by good

¹ *Camelot*.—This was the place now called Camel, near South-Cadbury, in Somersetshire, where the vast entrenchments of an ancient town or station are still seen. Strangely enough, our romance, a little further on, identifies Camelot, very erroneously, with Winchester; and Caxton, as appears by his preface, imagined it to be in Wales.

² *Avelyon*.—No doubt Avallon the celebrated island in which Glastonbury was built. Perhaps the original was merely *la dame de l'yle d'Avelyon*, the lady of the isle of Avelyon.

³ *By rowe*.—i. e. in turn, one after the other.

'meanes of the barons hee was delivered out of prison. And so he went privily into the court, and saw this adventure, whereof his heart raysted¹, and would assay it as other knights did, but, for because he was poore and poorely arrayed, he put him not farr in presse. But in his heart he was fully assured to doe as well as any knight that was there. And as that damosell tooke her leave of king Arthur and al the barons, this knight Balin caled unto her and said, 'Damosell, I pray you of your courtesie to suffer me as well to assay as these lords.' Then Balin tooke the sword by the girdell and scabbard, and drew it out easily, and when hee looked upon the sword it pleased him much. 'Now gentle and courteous knight,' said the damosell, 'give mee the sword againe.' 'Nay,' said Balin, 'for this sword will I keepe, but it be taken from me by force.' 'Well,' said the damosell, 'ye are not wise to keepe the sword from me, for ye shall sley with the sword the best friend that ye have, and the man that ye most love in this world, and the sword shall be your destruction.' 'I shall take the adventure,' said Balin, 'that God will ordaine to me, but the sword ye shall not have at this time by the faith of my body.' Anon after Balin sent for his horse and his armour, and so would depart fro the court, and tooke his leave of king Arthur. 'Truely,' said king Arthur, 'I am right wroth for your departure; I beseech you, faire knight, that ye wil not tarry long, and ye shall be right welcome to me and to all my barons, and I shall amend al that is amisse and that I have done against you.' 'God thanke your lordship,' said Balin, and therewith made him ready to depart. Then the most part of the knights of the round table said that Balin did not this adventure all onely by might, but by witchcraft.

CHAP. XXVIII.—*How the ladie of the lake demanded the knights head that had wonne the sword, or the maydens head.*

THE meane while that this knight was making him ready to depart, there came into the court a lady, which hight the lady of the lake, and she came on horsebacke richly beseene, and saluted king Arthur, and there she asked him a gift that he had promised her when she gave him the sword.

'That is sooth,' said king Arthur, 'a gift I promised you; but I have forgotten the name of the sword which ye gave me.' 'The name of it,' said the lady, 'is Excalibur², that is as much to say as cutte-steele.' 'Ye say well,' said king Arthur, 'aske what ye will, and ye shall have it, if it lye in my power to give it.' 'Wel,' said the lady of the lake, 'I aske the head of the knight that hath wonne the sword, or else the damosels head that brought it; for he slew my brother, a full good knight and a true, and that gentlewoman was causer of my fathers death.'

¹ *Raysed*.—Rose.

² *Excalibur*.—See before, pp. 69, 84.

'Truely,' said king Arthur, 'I may not graunt you neither of their heades with my worshiþe, therefore aske what ye will else and I shall fulfill your desire.' 'I will aske none other thing of you,' said the lady. When Balin was redy to depart he saw the lady of the lake there, by whose meanes was slaine his own mother, and he had sought her three yeeres. And when it was told him that she demanded his head of king Arthur, he went strait to her and said, 'Evill be ye found, ye would have my head, and therefore ye shall loose yours;' and with his sword lightly he smote of her head, in the presence of king Arthur. 'Alas, for shame!' said the king, 'you have shamed me and all my court. What cause soever ye had, ye should have forborne her in my presence; such another despite had I never in my court afore, therefore withdraw you out of my court in all the haste ye may.' Then Balin tooke up the head of the lady and bare it with him to his hostry¹, and there he met with his squire, and so they rode foorth out of the towne. 'Now,' said Balin, 'we must heere depart; take you this head and bare it to my friends, and tell them how I have sped.' 'Alas,' said the squire, 'ye are greatly to blame for to displease king Arthur.' 'As for that,' said Balin, 'I will hie me in all the haste I may to meete with Rience, and destroy him, or else to die therefore; and if it may happen me to winne him, then will king Arthur be my good and gracious lord.' 'Where shall I meete with you?' said the squire. 'In king Arthurs court,' said Balin. So his squire and he departed at that time.

CHAP. XXIX.—*How Merlin told the adventure of the damosell.*

AT that time there was in king Arthurs court a knight that was the kings sonne of Ireland, and his name was Lanceor; and he had great spite at Balin for the atcheaving of the sword, that any should be accounted of more prowesse than he was; and he asked king Arthur if he would give him leave to ride after Balin and to revenge the despite that he hath done. 'Doe your best,' said king Arthur, 'for I am right wroth with Balin; I would hee were quite of the despite that he hath done to me and to my court.' Then this Lanceor went to his hostrie to make him redy. In the meane while came Merlin to king Arthurs court, and there it was told him of the adventure of the sword, and of the lady of the lake. 'Now shall I say to you,' said Merlin, 'this damosell that here standeth, that brought the sword unto your court, I shal tel you the cause of her comming, she is the falsest damosel that liveth.'

¹ *Hostry*.—An inn, or lodging.

•CHAP. XXX.—*How Balin was pursued by Sir Lanceor a knight of Ireland, and how Balin slew him.*

SO the knight of Ireland armed him at all points and rode after as fast as his horse could run, and within a little space on a mountaine he had a sight of Balin, and with a loude voice he cried to him, and said: 'Abide knight, for ye shall abide whether ye will or will not, and the sheild that is tofore you shall not helpe you.'

When Balin heard that noyse, he turned his horse fiersly, and said, 'Faïre knight, what will you with me, will yee just with me?' 'Yea,' said the Irish knight, 'therefore am I come after you.' 'Of what court be ye sent fro?' said Balin. 'I am come fro the court of king Arthur,' said the knight of Ireland, 'that am come hither for to revenge the despite that ye have done this day to king Arthur and to his court.'

'Well,' said Balin, 'I see well I must have adoe with you, and your quarell is full simple to me, for the lady that is dead did great damage, and else I would have beene as loth as any knight that liveth for to slea a lady.' 'Mak you ready,' said the knight Lanceor, 'and dresse you to me, for one of us shall abide in the field.' Then they came together as fast as their horses might drive, and the kinges sonne of Ireland smote Balin upon his shield, that his speare went all to shivers. And Balin smote him with such a might that it went through his shield, and so peared through his body, and Balin saw him lye as a dead corps.

CHAP. XXXI.—*How a damosell which was in love with Lancror, slew her selfe for his love, and how Balin met with his brother Balan.*

THEN he looked by him and was ware of a damosell that came riding as fast as her horse might gallop, upon a fair palfray; and when she espied that sir Lanceor was slaine, then she made sorrow out of measure; therewith she tooke the sword from her love that lay dead; and sodainly she set the pomel of the sword to the grounde and runne her selfe through the body. 'Alas,' said Balin, 'me repenteth sore the death of this knight for the love of this damosell, for there was much true love betweene them both.' And for sorow might no longer behold them, but turned his horse and looked toward a forrest, and there he espyed the armes of his brother Balan. And when they were met, they put off their helmes and kissed together, and wept for joye and pittie. And anone Balin told unto his brother of all his adventures of the sword and of the death of the lady of the lake, and how king Arthur was displeased with him. 'Truely,' said Balin, 'I am right heavy of minde that my lord king Arthur is displeased with me, for he is the most worshipfulest knight that reigneth now on the earth, and

his love I will get or else I will put my life in adventure; for king Ryence of Northwales lieth at a syege at the castle Terrabill, and thither will wee draw in al haste, to prove our worship and prowesse upon him.' 'I will well,' said Balan, 'that we doe so and we will helpe each other as brethren ought to doe.'

CHAP. XXXII.—*How a dwarfe reproved Balin for the death of Lancelor, and how king Marke of Cornewayle found them, and made a tombe over them.*

'BROTHER,' said Balin, 'let us goe hence, and well bee we met.' The meane while as they talked, there came a dwarfe from the citie of Camelot on horsebacke, and found the dead bodyes, wherefore he made great dole, and said, 'Which of you knights hath done this deede?' 'Whereby askest thou it?' said Balin. 'For I would wite,' said the dwarfe. 'It was I,' said Balin, 'that slew this knight in my defence, for hither came he to chace me, and this damosell slew her selfe for his love.' 'Alas,' said the dwarfe, 'thou haste done great damage unto thy selfe, for this knight that is here dead was one of the most valiantest men that lived, and trust thou well, Balin, that the kinne of this knight will chace thee through the world till they have slaine thee.' 'As for that,' said Balin, 'I feare it not greatly; but I am right heavie because I have displeased my soveraigne lord king Arthur, for the death of this knight.' So, as they talked together, there came a king of Cornewaile which was named king Marke¹, and when he saw these two bodies dead and understood how they were dead by one of the two knights above said, then made king Marke great sorrow for the true love that was betweene them, and said: 'I wil not depart from hence til I have on this earth made a tombe.' And there he pight his pavilions, and sought through all the countrie to finde a tombe. And in a church they found one was rich and faire, and then the king let put them both in the earth, and put the tombe on them, and wrote both their names on the tombe.

CHAP. XXXIII.—*How Merlin prophesied that two of the best knights of the world should fight there, which were sir Lancelot and sir Tristram.*

THE meane while as this was in doing, came Merlin unto King Marke, and seeing all his doing, said, 'Here in this place shall be the greatest battaile betweene two knights that ever was or ever shall bee, and the truest lovers, and yet none of them shall sley other.' And there Merlin wrote their names

¹ *King Marke.*—This personage is so celebrated among the heroes of the romances of king Arthur, that it is hardly necessary to give any particular account of him here, especially as we shall find him acting a more prominent part further on.

upon the tombe with letters of gold that should fight in that place, whose names were Lancelot du Lake and Tristram de Lioness¹. 'Me repenteth,' said Merlin, 'because of the death of that lady; for thou shalt hurt the truest knight that now liveth, and through that stroke three kingdomes shall be in great povertie, miserie, and wretchednesse twelve yeeres, and the knight shall not be whole of that wound in many yeeres.' And therewith anon Merlin sodainly vanished away. Then Balin and his brother tooke their leave of king Marke.

'First,' said the king, 'tel me your name.' 'Sir,' said Balin, 'ye may see he beareth two swords, thereby ye may call him the knight with the two swords.' And so departed king Marke, and rode to Camelot to king Arthur, and Balin and his brother took the way to king Rience, and as they rode together they met with Merlin disguised, but they knew him not. 'Whether ride ye?' said Merlin. 'We have little to doe,' said the two knights, 'for to tell thee; but what is thy name?' said Balin. 'As at this time,' said Merlin, 'I will not tell thee.' 'It is full evil scene,' said the two knights, 'that thou art a true man, when thou wilt not tell thy name.' 'As for that,' said Merlin, 'be it as it may, but I can tel you wherefore yee ride this way, for to meete king Rience, but it wil not availe you without you have my counsaile.' 'Ah!' said Balin, 'ye are Merlin. We wil be ruled by your counsaile.' 'Come on,' said Merlin, 'ye shall have great worship, and looke that ye doe knightly, for yee shall have great neede.' 'As for that,' said Balin, 'dread ye not, we will doe what we may.'

CHAP. XXXIV.—*How Balin and his brother, by the counsaile of Merlin, tooke king Rience and brought him unto king Arthur.*

THEN Merlin lodged them in a wood amongst leaves beside the highway, and took off the bridles of their horses, and put them to grasse, and laid them downe to rest them till it was nigh midnight. Then Merlin bad them arise and make them ready, for the king was nigh them, that was stolen away from his hoast with three score horses of his best knights, and twenty of them rode tofore to warn the lady de Vauce that the king was comming. 'Which is the king?' said Balin. 'Abide,' said Merlin, 'here in a straight way ye shal meete with him.' Anone Balin and his brother met with the king, and smote him downe, and wounded him fiersly, and slew moe then fortie of his men, and the remnant fled. Then went they againe to king Rience, and would have slaine him, if he had not yeelded him to their grace. And so they laid him on an horse litter. With

¹ The history of Sir Tristram, or more properly sir Tristan, one of the most celebrated heroes of medieval romance, occupies a large place in a subsequent part of the present work.

that Merlin was vanished and came to king Arthur afore hand, and told him how his most enemy was taken and disconfited. 'By whom?' said king Arthur. 'By two knights,' said Merlin, 'that would please your lordship, and to-morrow ye shall know what they be.' Anone after came the knight with the two swords and Balan his brother, and brought with them king Rience, and there delivered him to the porters and charged them with him; and so they two returned againe in the springing¹ of the day. King Arthur came to king Rience and said, 'Sir king, you are welcom, by what adventure come ye hither?' 'Sir,' said king Rience, 'I came hither by an hard aventure.' 'Who wan you?' said king Arthur. 'Sir,' said Rience, 'the knight with the two swords and his brother, which are two marvilous knights of prowes.' 'I know them not,' said king Arthur, 'but much I am beholden unto them.' 'Ah,' said Merlin, 'I shall tell you, it is Balin that atcheaved the sword, and his brother Balan, a good knight, there liveth not a better in prowesse and worthinesse; and it shal be the greatest dole of him that ever was of knight, for he shall not long endure.' 'Alas,' said king Arthur, 'that is great pittie, for I am greatly beholden unto him, and I have full evill deserved it unto him for his kindenesse.' 'Nay,' said Merlin, 'he shall doe much more for you, and that shall ye know or it be long. But, sir, are ye purveyed?' said Merlin, 'for to morrow the hoast of Nero, king Rience brother, will set upon you afore diner with a mighty hoast, therefore make you ready, for I will depart from you.'

CHAP. XXXV.—*How king Arthur had a battaile against Nero and king Lot of Orkeney, and how king Lot was deceived by Merlin, and how twelve kings were slaine.*

THEN king Arthur made ready his hoast in ten battailes, and Nero was ready in the field afore the castle Terrabil with a mightie hoast, for hee had ten battailes, with much more people than king Arthur had. So Nero himselfe had the vaward² with the most party of his people; and Merlin came to king Lot, of the yle of the Orkeney, and held him with a tale of prophesie till Nero and his people were destroyed. In the meane while came one to king Lot, and told him that while he taried there Nero was destroyed. 'Alas! I am shamed,' said king Lot, 'for through my default is slaine many a worshipfull man; for if wee had beene together there had beene no hoast under heaven that had beene able to match us. This fayter³ with his prophesie hath mocked me.' And Merlin knew wel

¹ *Springing*.—Caxton has *in the dauning of the day*.

² *Vaward*.—The van-guard, or avant-guard.

³ *Fayter*.—A flatterer, or deceiver.

that one of the kings should be dead that day, and loth was Merlin that any of them both should be slaine; but of the twaine he had lever king Lot had beene slaine then king Arthur.

'Now, what is best to doe,' said king Lot, 'whether is it better for to treat with king Arthur, or to fight, for the most part of our people are slaine and destroyed?' 'Sir,' said a knight, 'set upon king Arthur, for he and his men are weary of fighting, and we be fresh.' 'As for me,' said king Lot, 'I would that every knight would doe his part as I will doe mine.' And then they advanced their baners and smote together; but alway king Lot held him in the formost, and did great deedes of armes, for all his hoast was borne up by his hands, for he abode and withstood al knights. So there was a knight that was called the knight with the strange beast, and his name was Pellinore, and he smote a mightie stroke at king Lot and hewed him to the browes. And then all the hoast of Orkeney fled for the death of king Lot, and there was slaine many a mothers sonne. But sir Gawaine revenged the death of his father the tenth yeare after he was made knight, and slew king Pellinore with his owne hands. Also there was slaine at the battaile twelve kings on king Lots side with Nero, and all were buried in the church of Saint Stevens, in Camelot; and the remnant of knights and of other were buried in a great roche¹.

CHAP. XXXVI.—*Of the entertainment of twelve kings, and of the prophesie of Merlin, and how Balin should give the dolorous stroke.*

SO at the entertainment² came king Lots wife Morgause, with her foure sonnes Gawaine, Agravaine, Gaheris, and Gareth. Also there came thither, king Urience, sir Ewaynes father, and Morgan le Fay his wife, that was king Arthurs sister. Then Merlin told unto king Arthur how Balin the worshipfull knight, should give the dolorous stroke, 'whereof shall fall great vengeance.' 'O where is Balin and Balan and Pellinore?' said king Arthur.

'As for sir Pellinore,' sayd Merlin, 'he will meete with you anone; and as for Balin he will not be long from you; but the other brother Balan will depart, and ye shall see him no more.' 'Now, by my faith,' said king Arthur, 'they are two marvailous knights, and namely Balin passeth of prowess farre of any knight that ever I found. I would to God that he would abide still with me.' 'Sir,' said Merlin, 'looke that yee keepe well the scabbard of Excalibur; for, as I told you, yee shall lose no blood as long as yee have the scabbard upon you, though yee

¹ *Roche*.—A rock.

² *Entertainment*.—In Caxton's text it is, evidently more correctly, *at the entertainment*.

have as many wounds upon your body as yee may have.' So afterward for great trust king Arthur betooke the scabbard to Morgan le Fay his sister; and she loved another knight better then her husband king Urience, or king Arthur, and she would have had king Arthur slaine; and therefore she let make an other scabbard like it by enchauntement, and gave the scabbard of Excalibur to her love, a knight named sir Accolon, which after had nigh slaine king Arthur.

CHAP. XXXVII.—*How a sorrowfull knight came tofore king Arthur, and how Balin fet¹ him, and how that knight was slaine by a knight invisible.*

WITHIN a day or two king Arthur was somewhat sicke, and he let pitch his pavilion in a meadow, and there he laid him downe on a pallet to sleepe; but he might have no rest. Anone after there came Balin, and when he saw king Arthur, anon he alighted off his horse and came to the king on foote, and saluted him. 'By my head,' said king Arthur, 'yee be welcome, sir. Right now came riding this way a knight making great sorrow, and I can not tel for what cause, wherefore I would desire you of your courtesie and gentilenesse that yee will fetch that knight againe, either by force, or else by his good wil.' 'I will doe more for your lordship then that,' said Balin; and so found the knight with a damosell in a forrest, and said, 'Sir knight, ye must come with me unto my lord king Arthur, for to tell him the cause of your sorrow.' 'Will ye be my warrant,' said the knight to Balin, 'if I goe with you?' 'Yea,' said Balin, 'or else I will die therefore.' And so he made him ready to goe with the good knight Balin, and left there the damosell. And as they were afore king Arthurs pavilion there came one invisible, and smote this knight that went with Balin throughout the body with a speare.

'Alas!' said the knight, 'I am slaine under your conduct and garde with a traitrous knight called Garlon; therefore take my horse the which is better then yours, and ride to the damosel, and follow the quest that I was in where as shee will leade you, and revenge my death when yee may best.' 'That shall I doe,' said Balin, 'and thereof I make avowe to you, by my knighthood.' And so he departed from this knight, making great sorrow. So king Arthur let burie this knight richly, and made a mention upon the tombe, how there was slaine Herleus le Berbeus, and also how the trechery was done by the knight Garlon. But ever the damosell bare the truncheon of the speare with her, that sir Herleus was slaine withall.

¹ *Fet.*—Fetched.

CHAP. XXXVIII.—*How Balin and the damosell met with a knight that was in likewise slaine, and how the damosel bled for the custome of a castle.*

SO Balin and the damosell rode into a forrest, and there met with a knight that asked Balin for what cause he made so great sorrow. 'Me list not to tell you,' said Balin. 'Now,' said the knight, 'and I were armed as ye be, I would fight with you.' And so they went to the hostry¹ and armed him, and so rode forth with Balin. And as they came by an hermitage fast by a churchyard, there came the knight Garlon invisible, and smote this good knight Perin de Mountbelyard with a speare through the body. And there the hermit and Balin buried the knight under a rich stone and a tombe royall. And on the morow they found letters of gold written how sir Gawaine shall revenge king Lots death his father upon king Pellinore. And anone after this, Balin and the damosell rode till they came to a castle, and there Balin alighted, and he and the damosell wend² to have gone into the castle. And anone as Balin came within the castle gate, the portecolis fel downe at his backe, and there came many men about the damosell, and would have slaine her. And when Balin saw that he went upon the walles and lepte over into the ditch and hurt him not; and anon he would have foughten with them. And they all said that they did nothing but the old custom of the castle, and told him how their lady was sicke, and shee might not be whole but if shee had a silver dish full of blood of a kings maiden daughter; and therefore the custome of this castle is, that there shall non passe this way but that shee shal bleede of her blood a silver dish full. And so Balin made her to bleede by her good will. But her blood helped not the lady. And so he and shee rested there all that night; and on the morrow they passed on their way. And as it telleth afterwards in the sancgreall that sir Percivalles sister helped that lady with her blood, whereof she died.

CHAP. XXXIX.—*How Balin met with the knight named Garlon at a feast, and there he slew him, to have his blood to heale therewith the sonne of his hoast.*

THEN they rode three or foure dayes and by happe they were lodged with a gentleman that was a rich man and well at ease. And as they sate at their supper, Balin heard one complaine grievously by him in a chaire. 'What noyse is this?' said Balin. 'Forsooth,' said his hoast, 'I will tell you; I was but late at a justing, and there I just with a knight that is brother unto king Pellam, and twice I smote him downe; and

¹ *Hostry*.—The hostelry, or inn where he lodged.

² *Wend*.—Thought.

³ See the third part of this romance.

then he promised to quit¹ me on my best friend, and so he wounded my sonne that cannot be whole till I have of that knights blood, and he rydeth alway invisible, but I know not his name.' 'Ah,' said Balin, 'I know that knight, his name is Garlon, he hath slaine two knights of mine in the same maner, therefore I had rather meet with that knight then all the gold in this realme, for the despite that he hath done mee.' 'Well,' said his hoast. 'I shall tell you: king Pellam, of Listenise², hath made a crie in all this country a great feast that shal bee within twentie dayes; and no knight may come there but if he bring his wife with him and that knight, your enemye and mine, yee shall see that day.' So on the morrowe they rode all three toward Pellam, and had fiftene dayes journey or they came thither; and that same day began the great feast. And they alight, and stabled their horses, and went into the castle; but Balins hoast might not be let in, because he had no lady. And so Balin went to the castle, and was set among knights of worship, and his lady afore him. Soone Balin asked a knight, 'Is there not a knight in this court whose name is Garlon?' 'Yonder he goeth,' said the knight, 'he with that blacke face; he is the marvaillest knight that is now living, for he destroyeth many good knights, for he goeth invisible.'

'Ah, wel,' said Balin, 'is that he?' Then Balin advised him long. Therewith Garlon espied that Balin beheld him, and then he came and smote Balin on the face with the backe of his hand, and said, 'Knight, why beholdest thou me so? for shame, therefore, eate thy meate, and doe that thou came for.' 'Thou saist sooth,' said Balin; 'this is not the first despite that thou hast done me, and therefore I will doe that I came for;' and rose up fiersly, and clave his head to the shoulders. 'Give me the troncheon,' said Balin to his lady, 'wherewith he slew your knight.' Anone she gave it him, for alway she bare that troncheon with her; and therewith Balin smote him through the body, and said openly, 'With that troncheon thou hast slaine a good knight, and now it sticketh in thy body.' And then Balin called to him his hoast, saying, 'Now may yee fetch blood inough to heale your sonne withall.'

CHAP. XL.—*How Balin fought with king Pellam, and how his sword brake, and how he gate a speare, wherewith he smote the dolorous stroke.*

ANONE all the knights rose up from the table for to set on Balin. Then king Pellam caught in his hand a grim weapon, and smote egerly at Balin, but Balin put the sword betweene his head and the stroke, and therewith his sword burst in sunder; and when Balin was weponlesse he ranne

¹ *To quit.*—To quite, to repay or revenge.

² *Listenise.*—*Lystynseyse*, Caxton.

- into a chamber for to seeke some weapon, and so from chamber to chamber; and at the last he entred into a chamber that was marvelously well dight and richly, and a bed arayed with cloth of gold, and one lying therein; and thereby stood a table of cleane gold, with foure pillars of silver that bare up the table, and upon the table stood a marvailous speare strangely wrought. And when Balin saw the spere, hee gat it in his hand, and turned him to king Pellam, and smote him that king Pellam fell downe in a swowne, and therewith the castle rove¹, and walls brake and fell to the earth, and Balin fel downe so that he might not stir hand nor foot. And so the most part of the castle that was fallen downe through that dolorous stroke lay upon king Pellam and Balin three dayes.

CHAP. XLI.—*How Balin was delivered by Merlin.*

THEN Merlin came thither, and took up Balin, and gat him a good horse, and bad him ride out of that countrey. 'I would have my damosell,' said Balin. 'Loe,' said Merlin, 'where shee lieth dead.' And king Pellam lay so many yeeres sore wounded, and might never be whole till Galahad healed him in the quest of the sangreal, for in that place was part of the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ that Joseph of Arimathy² brought into this land; and there himselfe lay in that rich bed. And that was the same speare that Longius³ smot our Lord to the heart. And king Pellam was nigh of Josephs kinne. So Balin rode forth through the faire countries and cities, and found the people dead on every side. And all that were on live cryd, 'O Balin, thou hast caused great damage in these countries; for the dolorous stroke that thou gavest unto king Pellam three countries are destroyed, and doubt not but the vengeance will fall on thee at the last.' When Balin was past the countries hee was passing faine⁴, so he rode eight dayes or he met with adventure.

CHAP. XLII.—*How Balin met with his brother Balan, and how each of them slew other unknowen till they were wounded to death.*

THEN afore him hee saw come riding out of a castle a knight, and his horse trapped al in red, and himselfe in the same colour. And when this knight in the red beheld Balin he knew

¹ *Rove*.—i. e. split, became riven. King Pellam, as well as his brother Garlon who went about invisible, appear to have been living in a state of enchantment.

² *Joseph of Arimathea*.—According to the legend, Joseph of Arimathea, after the death of our Saviour, obtained possession of the hanap, or cup, from which Christ had served the wine at the Last Supper, which he brought with him to Britain, the inhabitants of which he is represented to have converted to Christianity. This cup was the holy grail, or, as it is called in our romance, the *sangreal*.

³ *Longius*.—This was the name given in the Middle Ages to the knight, or soldier, who pierced the side of the Saviour with his spear to ascertain if he were dead.

⁴ *Faine*.—Glad.

not that he saw his brother. And so they aventred¹ their speares, and came mervailously fast together, and smote either other in the shields, but their speares and their course was so big that it bare downe horse and man, so that they lay both in a swowne; but Balin was sore brused with the fall of his horse, for he was weary of travaile. And Balan the first that rose on foote, and drew his sword, and went toward Balin; and he arose and went against him, but Balan smote Balin first, and he put up his shield, and smote him through the shield, and brake his helme. Then Balin smote him againe with that unhappy sword, and wel nigh had feld his brother Balan, and so they fought there together till their breaths failed. Then Balin looked up to the castle, and saw the towers stand full of ladyes. And at that time there was none of them both but they had smitten either other seaven great wounds, so that the least of them might have been the death of the mightiest giant in the world. At the last Balan, the younger brother, withdrew him a little and laid him down. Then said Balin le Savage, 'What knight art thou? for or now I found never no knight that matched me.' 'My name is,' said he, 'Balan, brother to the good knight Balin.' 'Alas!' said Balin, 'that ever I should see this day.' and therewith he fel backward in a swowne. Then Balan went on all foure feete and hands, and put off the helme of his brother, and might not know him by the visage it was so full hewen and bebled; but when he awok he said, 'O Balan my brother, thou hast slaine me, and I thee, wherefore all the wide world shall speake of us both.'

'Alas!' said Balan, 'that ever I saw this day, that through mishap I might not know you, for I espied well your two swords, but because yee had another shield, I deemed you had beene another knight.' 'Alas!' said Balin, 'al that made an unhappy knight in the castle, for he caused me to leave mine owne shield to the destruction of us both; and if I might live, I would destroy that castle for the ill customes.' Right so came the lady of the tower, with foure knights, and sixe ladyes, and six yeomen, unto them; and there she heard how they made their mone either to other. So Balan prayed the lady that shee would burie them both in one tombe where the battel was done. And she graunted them with weeping cheere, and said, 'It should be done richly and in the best manner.' 'Now will ye send for a priest, that we may receive the sacrament and blessed body of our Lord Jesus Christ.' 'Yea,' said the lady, 'it shal be done.' And so all the ladyes and gentlewomen wept for pittie. And anone Balan dyed; but Balin dyed not till the midnight after, and so were buried both; and the lady

¹ *Aventred*.—To aventer was to place the spear in the position for striking an adversary.

•let make a mention¹ of Balan, how he was there slaine by the hands of his owne brother, but she knew not Balins name.

CHAP. XLIII.—*How Merlin buried Balin and Balan the two brethren in one tombe, and of Balins sword.*

IN the morrow came Merlin, and let write Balins name uppon the tombe with letters of gold: 'Heere lyeth Balin le Savage, that was the knight with the two swords, and hee that smote the dolourous stroke.' Merlin let make there also a bed, that there should never man lye in but he went out of his wit, yet Lancelot du Lake foredid² that bed through his noblenesse. And anon after, as Balin was dead, Merlin tooke his sword, and tooke off the pomel, and set on another pomell. Then Merlin bad a knight that stood afore him to handle that sword, and he assayed, but he could not handle it. Then Merlin laught. 'Why laugh ye?' said the knight. 'This is the cause,' said Merlin; 'there shal never no man handle this sword but the best knight of the world, and that shall bee sir Lancelot, or else Galahad his sonne; and Lancelot with this sword shal slay the man that in this world he loved best, that shall bee sir Gawayne.' All this he let write in the pomell of the sword. Then Merlin let make a bridge of iron and of steele into that iland, and it was but halfe a foote broad, and there shall never man passe that bridge, nor have hardnesse to goe over, but if he were a passing good man and a good knight without trechery or vilany. Also the scabbard of Balins sword Merlin left it on this side the iland that Galahad should finde it. Also Merlin let make by his subtiltie and craft that Balins sword was put in marbleston, and the stone hove alwayes above the water, and so by adventure it swam downe the streame to the citie of Camelot, that is in English, Winchester³; and that same day Galahad came with king Arthur and atchieved the sword that was there in the marble ston hoving upon the water. Soone after this was done, Merlin came to king Arthur, and told him of the dolorous stroke that Balin gave to king Pellam, and how Balin and Balan fought together the marvaillest battaile that ever was heard of, and how they were buried both in on tombe. 'Alas!' said king Arthur, 'this is the greatest pittie that ever I heard tell of two knights; for in the world I know not such two knights as they were.' Thus endeth the tale of Balin and Balan, two brethren borne in Northumberland, good knights.

¹ It may, perhaps, be well to remark that the word *mention* is, here and in other passages, used in the sense of a monumental inscription.

² *Foredid*—Destroyed.

³ *Winchester*.—An evident mistake of the compiler of this romance, see before, the note to p. 86.

CHAP. XLIV.—*How king Arthur tooke and wedded Guenever unto his wife, which was daughter to Leodegrance king of the land of Cameliard, with whom he had the round table.*

KING Arthur, for the most part of the dayes of his life, was much ruled by the counsaile of Merlin. So it befell on a time that king Arthur said unto Merlin: 'My barons will let me have no rest, but needes they will have that I take a wife, and I will none take but by thy counsaile and by thine advise.' 'It is well done,' said Merlin, 'that ye take a wife, for a man of your bountie and noblenesse should not be without a wife. Now is there any faire lady that yee love better then another?' 'Yea,' said king Arthur, 'I love Guenever¹, the kings daughter Leodegrance of the land of Camelyard², which Leodegrance holdeth in his house the table round that ye told he had of my father Uther. And this damosell is the most gentilest and fairest lady that I know living, or yet that ever I could find.' 'Sir,' said Merlin, 'as of her beautie and fairenesse she is one of the fairest that live; but and you loved her not so well as ye doe, I would finde you a damosell of beautie and of goodnesse that should like you, and please you, and your heart were not set. But there as a mans heart is set, he will be loth to returne.' 'That is truth,' said king Arthur. But Merlin warned the king privily that Guenever was not fitting for him to take to wife, for he warned him that Lancelot should love her and shee him againe; and so he turned his tale to the adventures of the sanggreall. And Merlin went forth to king Leodegrance of Cameliard, and told him of the desire of the king, that he would have to his wife Guenever his daughter. 'That is to me,' said king Leodegrance, 'the best tidings that ever I heard, that so worthy a king of prowesse and of noblenesse will wed my daughter. And as for my lands I will give him, wisht³ I that it might please him, but he hath lands enough, hee needeth none; but I shall send him a gift that shal please him much more, for I shal give him the table round, the which Utherpendragon gave me; and when it is ful compleate, there is an hundred knights and fiftie, and as for an hundred good knights I have my selfe, but I lack fifty, for so many have beene slaine in my dayes.' And so king Leodegrance delivered his daughter Guenever unto Merlin, and the table round with the hundred knights; and so they rode till they came unto London.

¹ *Guenever*.—Geoffrey of Monmouth calls this celebrated heroine of romance, Guanhumara. Hist. Reg. Brit. ix. 9. See a former note, p. 77. According to some of the romances, it was Guenever who first became enamoured of king Arthur, on account of his gallant exploits, and she took care to show herself to the best advantage, in order to excite his passion.

² *Lodigrean of the land of Camelyard*, Caxton.

³ *Wisht*.—i. e. wist, knew.

CHAP. XLV.—*How the knights of the round table were ordained, and how their sieges¹ were blessed by the archbishop of Canterbury.*

WHEN king Arthur heard of the comming of Guenever and the hundred knights with the table round, hee made great joy for their comming. ‘Now, Merlin,’ said king Arthur, ‘goe thou and espie me in al this land fiftie knights that beene of most prowesse and worshippe.’ Within short time Merlin made the best speede he might, and found twenty eight good knights, but no more could hee find. Then the archbishop of Canterbury was sent for, and he blessed the sieges of his table round with great roialty and devotion, and there set the twenty eight knights in their sieges. And when they were gone, Merlin found in the sieges letters of gold that told the knights names that had sitten therein. But two sieges were void. And so anon came young Gawayne, and asked the king a gift. ‘Aske,’ said the king, ‘and I shall grant it you.’ ‘Sir, I aske that ye will make me knight the same day that ye shall wed faire Guenever.’

CHAP. XLVI.—*How a poore man, riding upon a leane mare, desired king Arthur to make his sonne a knight.*

FORTH withall there came a poore man into the court, and brought with him a faire young man of eightene yeares of age, riding upon a leane mare. Anone as he came before the king he saluted him, and said, ‘Sir, I aske that at this time of your marriage, ye will make my sonne here a knight.’ ‘It is a great thing that thou askest of me. What is thy name?’ said the king to the poore man. ‘Sir, my name is Aries the cowheard².’ ‘Whether commeth this of thee or of thy sonne?’ said the king. ‘Nay, sir,’ said Aries, ‘this desire commeth of my sonne, and not of me. For I have thirteene sonnes, and all they will fall to what labour I put them to, but this child will doe no labour for me, but alwayes he desireth of me that hee might be made a knight.’ ‘What is thy name?’ said the king unto the young man. ‘Sir, my name is Tor.’ The king beheld him fast, and saw he was passingly well visaged and passingly well made of his yeares. ‘Now,’ said king Arthur unto Aries the cowheard, ‘where is that sword that he shal be made knight withal?’ ‘It is here,’ said Tor. ‘As for a knight, I will make you;’ said the king and therewith smote him in the neck with the sword. ‘Now, Merlin,’ said king Arthur, ‘say whether this Tor shal be a good knight or no.’ ‘Yea, sir, he ought to be a good knight,

¹ *Sieges.*—*Seats.*

subject of many romances and stories. It may be remarked that riding on a mare was not considered honourable in a knight.

for he is come of as good a man as any is on live, and of kings' blood.' 'How so, sir!' said the king. 'I shall tell you,' said Merlin; 'this poore man Aries the cowheard is not his father, he is nothing like' to him, for king Pellinore is his father.'

CHAP. XLVII.—*How sir Tor was known for the sonne of king Pellinore, and Gawayne was made knight.*

SO on the morrow king Pellinore came to the court of king Arthur, which told him of Tor, how he was his sonne, and how he had made him knight at the request of the cowheard. When king Pellinore beheld Tor, hee pleased him much. So the king made Gawayne knight, but Tor was the first that he made at the feast. 'What is the cause,' said king Arthur, 'that there bene two places void in the sieges?' 'Sir,' said Merlin, 'there shall no man sit in those places but they that shall be of most worship. But in the siege perillous there shall no man sit therein but one, and if there be any so hardy to do it, he shall be destroyed, and he that shall sit there shall have no fellow.' And therewith Merlin tooke king Pellinore by the hand, and, in the one hand next the two sieges and the siege perillous, he said in open audience, 'This is your place, and best ye be worthy to sit therein of any that is here. Thereat had sir Gawayne great envy, and said to Gaheris his brother, 'Yonder knight is put unto great worship, the which greveth me sore, for he slew our father king Lot, therefore I will slay him.' 'Ye shall not doe so,' said Gaheris, 'at this time; for at this time I am but a squier, and when I am made knight I will be avenged on him; and therefore, brother, it is best ye suffer till another time, that we may have him out of the court, for and wee did so now we should trouble this high feast.' 'I will well,' said sir Gawayne, 'as ye will' ².

CHAP. XLVIII.—*How, at the feast of the wedding of king Arthur unto Guenever, a white hart came into the hall, and how a brachet was taken away.*

THEN the king was wedded at Camelot unto dame Guenever in the church of Saint Stevens with great solemnitie; and as every man was set after his degree, Merlin went unto all the knights of the round table and bad them sit still, and that none should remove, 'for ye shall see a strange and a marvelous adventure.' Right so as they sat, there came running in a

¹ *Like*.—Caxton reads *syb*, i. e. akin, which is, no doubt, the more correct.

² It has been remarked by more than one writer, that the compiler of this romance of the Morte Arthur, whether Malory wrote it or merely translated it, labours always to depreciate the character of Gawaine, and speaks disparagingly of him, quite contrary to the spirit of the older romances, in which he is held forth as a pure example of the perfect knight.

white hart into the hal, and a white brachet¹ next him, and other hounds and the hart went about the table round; and leapt a great leape, and overthrew a knight that sat at the bords side; and therewith the knight arose, and tooke up the brachet, and so went forth out of the hall, and took his horse and rode his way with the brachet. Right so came in a lady on a white palfrey, and cryed aloud to king Arthur, 'Sir, suffer me not to have this dispite, for the brachet was mine that the knight lad away.' 'I may not doe therewith,' said the king. With this there came a knight riding all armed on a great horse, and tooke the lady away with him by force. 'My lord Arthur,' said Merlin, 'let call sir Gawayne, for he must bring againe the white hart. Also, sir, ye must let cal sir Tor, for he must bring againe the brachet and the knight, or else slay him. Also let call king Pellinore, for he must bring againe the lady and the knight, or else slay him. And these three knights shall doe marvailous adventures or they come againe.'

CHAP. XLIX.—*How sir Gawayne rode for to fetch againe the hart, and how two brethren fought each againe other for the hart.*

SIR Gawayne rode more then a pace, and Gaheres his brother rode with him, in stead of a squire. So as they rode, they saw two knights fight on horseback passing sore; so sir Gawayne and his brother rode betweene them, and asked them for what cause they fought so. 'Sir,' said the elder, 'there came a white hart this way this day, and we understood it was aventure made for the high feast of king Arthur; and so we thought to prove whether I or my brother was better knight.' 'This is a simple cause,' said sir Gawayne, 'uncouth² men ye should debate withall, and not brother with brother; therefore, and if ye wil doe by my counsell, ye shall yeeld you unto me, and ye shall goe unto king Arthur and yeeld you unto his grace.' 'We will agree to fullfill your wil, but by whom shall we say that we be thither sent?' 'Yee may say by the knight that followeth the quest of the white hart. Now what is your names?' said sir Gawayne. 'Sorlouse of the Forrest,' said the elder. 'And my name is,' said the yonger, 'Brian of the Forrest.' And so they departed, and went to the kings court, and sir Gawayne went on his quest; and as sir Gawayne followed the hart by the crie of the hounds; and there stood a knight who said, 'Sir knight, come not after the hart, but if thou wilt just with me.' 'I will not faile as for that,' said sir Gawayne, 'to follow the quest that I am in.' And so they gat their speares and ran together full hard, but sir Gawaine smote

¹ *A brachet.*—A kind of small scenting hound.

² *Uncouth.*—Strange.

him off his horse. 'What is your name?' said sir Gawayne: 'Allardin of the Iles,' said the other. Then either dressed their shields, but sir Gawaine smot him through the helme so hard that it went to the braines, and the knight fel down dead. 'Ah,' said Gaheris, 'that was a mighty stroke of a yong knight.'

CHAP. L.—*How the hart was chased into a castle and there slaine, and how sir Gawaine slew a lady.*

THEN sir Gawayne and Gaheris chased the hart into a castle, and in the chief place of the castle they slew the hart. Right so there came a knight out of a chamber with a sword in his hand, and slew two of the hounds, and the remnant he chased out of the castle. And when hee came againe, he said, 'O my white hart, me repenteth that thou art dead, for my soveraigne lady gave thee to me, and evil have I kept thee, and thy death shall be deare bought and I live.' 'Why have ye slaine my houndes?' said sir Gawaine; 'for they did but their kind, and I had rather ye had worken your anger upon me then upon the dombe beasts.' 'Thou saist truth,' said the knight; 'I have avenged me on thy hounds, and so will I be on thee or thou goe.' At the last sir Gawaine smote the knight so hard that he fel to the earth; and then he cried mercy and yeilded him, and besought him as he was a knight and gentleman to save his life. 'Thou shalt die,' said sir Gawaine, 'for slaying of my hounds.' Sir Gawaine would no mercy have, but unlaced his helm to have striken of his head, right so came his lady out of her chamber and fell over him, and so he smote off her head by misadventure. 'Alas,' said Gaheris, 'that is foule and shamefully done, that shame shall never from you. Also ye should give mercy unto them that aske mercy, for a knight without mercy is without worshippe.' Sir Gawaine was so astonied at the death of this faire lady that hee wist not what hee did, and said to the knight, 'Arise, I will give thee mercy.' 'Nay, nay,' said the knight, 'I take no force of¹ mercy now, for thou hast slain my love and my lady that I loved best of all earthly things.' 'Me repenteth it sore,' said sir Gawaine, 'for I thought to have striken at thee. But now thou shalt goe unto king Arthur, and tell him of thine adventures, and how thou art overcome by the knight that went in the quest of the white hart.' 'I take no force,' said the knight, 'whether I live or die.' But for dread of death hee swore to goe unto king Arthur, and hee made him for to beare one greyhound before him upon his horse, and another behind him also. 'What is your name,' said sir Gawaine, 'or we depart?' 'My name is,' said the knight, 'Ablemore of the Marise².' So he departed toward Camelot.

¹ *I take no force of.*—I care nothing for.

² *Marise.*—A marsh.

CHAP. LI.—*How foure knights fought against sir Gawaine and Gaheris, and how they were overcome, and their lives saved at the request of foure damosels.*

AND sir Gawaine went into the castle, and made him ready to lye there all night, and would have unarmed him. 'What will ye doe?' said Gaheris; 'will yee unarme you in this country? ye may well thinke that yee have many enemies here about.' They had no sooner said that word but there came foure knights well armed, and assayled sir Gawaine hard, and said thus unto him: 'Thou hast shamed thy knighthood, for a knight without mercy is dishonoured. Thou hast also slaine a faire lady, which is great shame for evermore, and thou shalt have great neede of mercy or thou depart from us.' And so they were on the one side and on the other that sir Gawaine and Gaheris were in great jeopardie of their lives, and one of them with a bowe smote sir Gawaine through the arme, that it grieved him wondrous sore. And there came foure ladyes and besought the knights of grace for sir Gawaine; and goodly at the request of the ladyes, they gave sir Gawaine and Gaheris their lives, and made them to yeeld them as prisoners. 'Alas,' said sir Gawaine, 'mine arme grieveth me sore. I am like to be maimed;' and so made his complaint piteously. On the morrow early came one of the foure ladyes to sir Gawaine, which had hard all his complaints, and said, 'Sir knight, what cheare?' 'Not good,' said he. 'It is your owne default,' said the lady, 'for ye have done a passing foule deede in the slaying of the lady, which will be great villany to you. But bee yee not of king Arthurs kinne?' 'Yes, truly,' said sir Gawaine. 'What is your name?' said the lady; 'ye must tel it or that ye passe.' 'My name is Gawaine, king Lots sonne of Orkeney, and my mother is king Arthurs sister.' 'Ah, then yee are nephew unto king Arthur,' said the lady, 'and I shall so speake for you that yee shall have conduct to goe to king Arthur for his love.' Then they gave him the head of the white hart, because it was in his quest¹. Then anon they delivered sir Gawaine under this promise, that he should bare the dead lady with him. And in this manner he rode forth towards Camelot. And anon as he was come to the court, Merlin desired of king Arthur that sir Gawaine should be sworne to tell of all his adventures: how he slew the lady, and how he would give no mercy to the knight, wherethrough the lady was slaine. Then the king and the queene were greatly displeased with sir Gawaine for the slaying of the lady; and there by the ordinance of the queene was set a quest¹ of ladys on sir Gawaine; and they judged him ever while he lived to be with al ladyes

¹ *Quest* occurs in this chapter in two different senses: first, in that of a search or chase, and secondly, in that of a committee of inquiry, or inquest.

and to fight for their quarrels, and never to refuse mercy to him that asketh mercy. And thus endeth the adventure of Sir Gawaine, which he did at the marriage of king Arthur.

CHAP. LII.—*How sir Tor rode after the knight with the brachet, and of his adventures by the way.*

THEN sir Tor rode after the knight with the brachet. Then there came one armed on horseback, and came fast toward sir Tor; and they ranne together that sir Tor bare him from his horse. And anon the knight yeelded him to his mercy. Then sir Tor was ware of another knight comming with great raundon¹, and the knight smote sir Tor a great strooke in the midst of the shield, that his speare all to-shievered, and sir Tor smote him through the shield bylow, that it went through the side of the knight, but the strooke slew him not. And therewith the knight yeelded him, and besought him of mercy. 'I wil wel,' said sir Tor, 'but thou and thy fellow must goe unto king Arthur, and yeeld you prisoners to him.' 'By whom shall wee say that wee are thither sent?' 'Yee shal say, "by the knight that went in quest of the knight that went with the brachet."' Now, what be your two names?' said sir Tor. 'My name is,' said the one, 'sir Felot of Langdock²,' 'And my name is,' said the other, 'sir Petipace of Winchelsee.' Then came a dwarfe and said to sir Tor, 'I pray you to give me a gift. I aske that yee will suffer mee to doe you service, for I will serve no more recreaunt knights.' 'Then take a horse anon,' said sir Tor, 'and come on and ride with me.' And so they rode through the forrest, and at the last they were ware of two pavilions by a priorie, with two shields, and the one shield was renewed³ with white, and the other shield was red.

CHAP. LIII.—*How sir Tor found the brachet with a lady, and how a knight assailed him for the said brachet.*

THEREWITH sir Tor alighted and so came to the white pavilion and saw three damosels lye therein on a pallet sleeping. And then hee went unto that other pavilion, and there he found a faire lady sleeping. And there was the white brachet, that bayed⁴ at her fast. And therewith anon the lady awoke, and went out of the pavilion, and all her damosels. But anon as sir Tor espied the white brachet, hee tooke her by force, and tooke her to the dwarfe. 'What will ye doe,' said the lady, 'will yee take away my brachet from me?' 'Yea,' said

¹ *Great raundon.*—*Raundon* or *random* meant, originally, force or impetuosity.

² *Langdock.*—*Laugduk*, Caxton. Perhaps a corruption of *Languedoc*.

³ *Renewed.*—Caxton reads *anewed*.

⁴ *Bayed.*—Barked.

sir Tor, 'this brachet have I sought from king Arthurs court to this place.' And so mounted upon his horse, and passed forth toward Camelot. With that they heard a knight call lowd that came after them, and said, 'Knight, abide, and yeeld my brachet that thou tookest from my lady.' Sir Tor returned againe, and they smote each other that both horse and men fell to the earth. Anon they lightly arose, and drew their swords, and smote through their shields that the canteles¹ fel off on both parties, and they had both many great wounds, and were passing weary. But sir Tor espied that the other knight fainted². Then sir Tor bad him yeeld him. 'That will I not,' said Abellius, 'while my life lasteth unlesse that thou wilt give mee the brachet.' 'That will I not doe,' said sir Tor, 'for it was my request³ to bring againe the brachet and thee, or else slay thee.'

CHAP. LIV.—*How sir Tor overcame the knight, and how he lost his head at the request of a lady.*

WITH that came a damosell riding upon a palfray as fast as shee might drive, and cried with a loud voice unto sir Tor. 'What will ye with me?' said sir Tor. 'I beseech thee,' said the damosell, 'give me a gift; I require thee, gentle knight, as thou art a gentleman.' 'Now,' said sir Tor, 'aske a gift, and I will give it you.' 'Gramarcie!' said the damosell, 'I aske the head of this false knight Abellius, for he is the most outrageous knight that liveth.' 'I am right sorry and loth,' sayd sir Tor, 'of that gift which I have graunted you; let him make you amends in that which he hath trespassed against you.' 'He can not make amends,' said the damosell, 'for hee hath slaine mine owne brother, though I kneeled halfe an houre afore him in the myre for to save my brothers life: and for all that I could doe or say, he smote off my brothers head, wherefore I require as thou art a true knight to give me my gift.' Then when Abelleus heard this, he was sore aferd, and yeelded him and asked mercy. 'I may not now,' said sir Tor, 'but if I should be found false of my promise, for when I would have taken you to mercy, ye would none aske.' And therewith he tooke off his helme, and smote off his head quite. So sir Tor departed, and came to Camelot on the third day by noone; and the king and the queene and all the court was passing glad of his comming, and made great joy that he was come againe.

¹ *Canteles*.—Portions, fragments.

² *Fainted*.—i.e. was becoming weak.

³ *Request*.—*Quest*, Caxton, and so all through the next chapter.

CHAP. LV.—*How king Pellinore rode after the lady and the knight that led her away, and how a lady desired helpe of him, and how hee fought with two knights for that lady, of whom he slew the one at the first strooke.*

THEN king Pellinore rode after the lady that the knight led away. So as king Pellinore rode in that valey, hee met with a poore labouring man. 'Sawest thou not,' said king Pellinore, 'a knight riding and leading away a lady?' 'Yes,' said the poore man, 'I saw that knight and the lady that made great mone, and yonder beeneath in a valey there shall ye see two pavilions; and if yee ride a pace ye shall find two knights fighting, and the lady is in keeping with the two squiers in the pavilions.' 'God thanke thee,' said king Pellinore. Then he rode a gallop¹ till that he had a sight of the two pavilions, and the two knights fighting. And anone he rode betweene them, and parted them in sonder, and asked why they fought. 'Sir knight,' said the one, 'this lady is my nigh kinswoman, mine aunts daughter, and when I heard her complaine that she was with him maugre her head, I waged battaile to fight with him.' 'Sir knight,' said the other, whose name was Hontzlake of Wentland², 'this lady I gate by my prowesse of armes this day of king Arthurs court.' 'That is truely³ said,' quoth king Pellinore, 'for ye came in there all sodainely as we were at the high feast, and tooke away this lady or any man might make him ready. Therefore the lady shall goe with me to king Arthur, or I shall die for it, for I have promised it unto him.' 'Well,' said the knight, 'make you ready, and wee shall assaile you with all our power.' And as king Pellinore would have put his horse from them and alight on foote, sir Hontzlake runne his horse through with the sword, and said, 'Now art thou on foote as wel as we.' So king Pellinore gave him such a strooke upon the helme that he clove downe the head to the chin, and therewith he fell to the earth dead.

CHAP. LVI.—*How king Pellinore gate the lady, and brought her to Camelot unto the court of king Arthur.*

AND then he turned him to that other knight, that was sore wounded. But when hee had scene the buffet that the other had, hee would not fight, but kneeled downe and said, 'Take my cosin the lady with you at your request, and I require you, as ye be a true knight, put her to no shame ne vilany.' 'What,' said king Pellinore, 'will ye not fight for her?' 'No, sir,' said the knight, 'I wil not fight with a knight

¹ *A gallop.*—Caxton reads *a wallop*.

² *Wentland.*—Gwentland, the district in Monmouthshire of which Caer-Went (the Roman Venta Silurum) was the chief town.

³ *Truely.*—Caxton has *untruly*, which is no doubt correct, for the knight did not obtain her by his prowess of arms at the court of king Arthur.

of prowess as ye be.' 'Wel,' said king Pellinore, 'ye say well; I promise you she shall have no vilany by me, as I am a true knight. But now I lack a horse,' said king Pellinore; 'I will have Hontzlake's horse.' 'Yee shall not neede,' said the knight, 'for I shall give you such a horse as shall please you, so that ye will lodge with me, for it is neere night.' 'I will well,' said king Pellinore, 'abide with you al night.' And on the morrow he heard a masse, and after dined¹, and then was brought him a faire bay courser and king Pellinore's saddle set upon him. 'Now what shall I call you?' said the knight, 'in as much as yee have my cosin at your desire of your quest.' 'Sir, I shall tell you, my name is Pellinore, king of the iles, and knight of the round table.' 'Now I am glad,' said the knight, 'that such a noble man as ye be shall have the rule of my cosin.' 'What is now your name?' said king Pellinore; 'I pray you tell me.' 'Sir,' said he, 'my name is sir Meliot of Logurs, and this lady my cosin hight² Nimue, and the knight that is in that other pavilion is my sworne brother, a passing good knight, and his name is Brian of the Iles.' And so king Pellinore departed with the lady, and brought her to Camelot. So as they rode in a vale, the ladies horse stumbled and threw her down, wherewith her arme was sore brused, and neere she sowned for paine and anguish. 'Alas! sir,' said the lady, 'mine arme is out of joynt, wherethrough I must needs rest me.' 'Ye shall doe well,' said king Pellinore; and so he alighted under a faire tree, where as was faire grasse, and he put his horse thereto, and so laid him under the tree and slept till it was nigh night, and when he awoke hee would have ridden. 'Sir,' said the lady, 'it is so darke that ye may as well ride backward as forward.' So they abode still, and made there their lodging. Then king Pellinore put off his armour, and then a litte before midnight they heard the trotting of an horse. 'Be ye still,' said king Pellinore, 'for we shall heare of some adventure.'

CHAP. LVII.—*How king Pellinore heard two knights, as he lay by night in a vale, and of other adventures.*

AND therewith he armed him. So right even afore him there met two knights, the one came from Camelot and the other from the north, and either saluted other. 'What tidings at Camelot?' said the one. 'By my head,' said the other, 'there have I beene, and espied the court of king Arthur, and there is such a fellowship that they may never be brok, and wel nigh al the world holdeth with king Arthur, for there is the floure of chivalry.' 'As for that,' said the other knight, 'I have brought a remedy with me, that is the greatest poison that ever

¹ *Dined*.—It has been before remarked that dinner was formerly a very early meal in the day. See p. 71.

² *Hight*.—Is called.

ye hard speake of, and to Camelot will I with it, for we have a friend right nigh king Arthur, and well cherished, that shall poyson king Arthur; so he hath promised our chiefetaines, and hath received great gifts for to do it.' And so they departed in sunder. Anone after king Pellinore made him ready, and his lady, and rode toward Camelot.

CHAP. LVIII.—*How Merlin was assotted and doted on one of the ladies of the lake, and he was shut in a roche under a stone by a wood side, and there died.*

AND therewith they departed; and so by noone they came to Camelot; and king Arthur and the queene were glad of king Pellinore's coming to the court. And there he was made to swere upon the foure evangelists for to tel al the truth of his quest, from the begining unto the ending. Then after these quests of sir Gawaine, of sir Tor, and of king Pellinore, Merlin fel in a dotage on the damosel that king Pellinore brought to the court with him, and she was one of the damosels of the lake which hight Nimue. And ever she made Merlin good cheere, till she had learned of him all manner thing that shee desired; and hee was so sore assotted upon her that he might not be from her. So upon a time he told unto king Arthur that he should not endure long, and that for al his crafts he should be put in the earth quicke¹; and so he told the king many things that should befall, but alwayes he warned king Arthur to keepe well his sword Excalibur and the scabbard, for he told him how the sword and the scabbard should be stolen by a woman from him that hee most trusted. And then he departed from king Arthur. And within a while the damosell of the lake departed, and Merlin went evermore with her wheresoever she went. So she and Merlin went over the sea unto the land of Benwicke, where as king Ban was king, that had great warre against king Claudas, and there Merlin spake with king Ban's wife, a faire lady and a good, and her name was Elein; and there he saw young Launcelot. There the queene made great sorrow for the mortall warre that king Claudas made on her lord and on her lands. 'Take no heavynesse,' said Merlin, 'for this child within this twenty yeare shall revenge you on king Claudas, that all Christendome shall speake of it, and I know well that his first name was Galahad, and sith ye have confirmed him Lancelot.' 'That is truth,' said the queene, 'his first name was Galahad. O Merlin, shall I live to see my sonne such a man of prowesse?' 'Yea, lady, on my perill; ye shall see it, and live after many winters².' And then soone after the lady and Merlin departed.

¹ *Quicke*.—i.e. alive.

² *Winters*.—Our Anglo-Saxon forefathers reckoned the years by winters, not by summers.

• And so upon a time it hapned that Merlin shewed to her in a roche where as was a great wonder, and wrought by enchauntment, which went under a stone¹. So by her subtil craft and working, she made Merlin to goe under that stone to let her wit of the mervailles there, but she wrought so there for him, that he came never out, for all the craft that he could doe. And so she departed, and left Merlin.

CHAP. LIX.—*How five kings came into this land to warre against king Arthur, and what counsaile king Arthur had against them.*

AND then king Arthur rode to Camelot, and there he made a solemne feast with mirth and joy. So anon after he returned unto Cardoyle³, and there came to king Arthur new tidings that the king of Denmarke, and the king of Ireland his brother, and the king of the Vale, and the king of Soleyse, and the king of the isle of Longtainse⁴, with a great hoast were entered into king Arthurs land, and burnt and slew all that they found afore them, both cities and castles, that it was great pittie to see. Then the king came to queene Guenever, and said, 'Lady, make you ready, for ye shall goe with me, for I may not long misse you, ye shall cause me to be the more hardier what adventure soever befall me. I will not wit⁵ my lady to be in no jeopardie.' 'Sir,' said she, 'I am at your command, and shall be ready what time soever ye be ready.' So on the morrow the king and the queene departed, and came into the north into a forrest beside Humber, and there lodged them. When the tidings came to the five kings above said, that king Arthur was beside Humber in a forest, ther was a knight, brother unto one of the five kings, that gave them this counsaile: 'Ye know wel that king Arthur hath with him the floure of chivalrie of the world; and therefore let us set upon him or it be day, and wee shall so slay of his knights that there shall not one escape.'

CHAP. LX.—*How king Arthur overthrew and slew the five kings, and made the remnant to flee.*

UNTO this counsaile the five kings assented, and so they passed forth with their hoast through Northwales, and came upon king Arthur by night, and set upon his hoast. 'Sirs,'

¹ *Under a stone.*—The manner of Merlin's death is variously related. In the French romance it is a bush of hawthorn in which he was enclosed by the fairy Viviana (the lady of the lake), to whom he had communicated the charm. She tried it upon her lover to ascertain if what he told her were true, and was grieved when she found that he could not be extracted from his thorny coverture.

² *Wit.*—For *wete*, know.

³ *Cardoyle.*—Carlisle, which was so called by the Normans, apparently through a difficulty of pronounciation, as they called Lincoln, Nicole.

⁴ *Longtainse.*—One might imagine this name to be made from *l'isle loigntaine*, the distant or remote island.

⁵ *Wit.*—Know.

said sir Kay, 'it is not good that we be unarmed.' 'We shall have no neede,' said sir Gawaine and sir Griflet, that lay in a little pavilion by the king. With that they hard a great noise, and many cried treason. Then came there a wounded knight to king Arthur, and said to him, 'Sir, save your selfe and my lady the queene, for our hoast is destroyed, and much people of ours slaine.' So anon the king and the queene and three knights tooke their horses and rode toward Humber to passe over it, and the water was so rough that they were afearde to passe over. And as they stood sir Kay saw the five kings comming on horsback by themselves alone, with their speares in their hand toward them. 'Lo,' said sir Kay, 'yonder be the five kings, let us goe to them and match them.' 'That were folly,' said sir Gawaine, 'for we are but foure and they be five.' 'That is truth,' said sir Griflet. 'No force,' said sir Kay, 'I will undertake two of them, and then may ye three undertake the other three.' And therewith sir Kay let his horse runne as fast as he might, and strooke one of them through the shield, that the king fel to the earth starke dead. That saw sir Gawaine, and ran unto another king, and he smote him through the body. And therewith king Arthur ran to another, and smote him through the body that he fell downe to the earth dead. Then sir Griflet ran to the fourth king, and gave him such a fall that he brake his necke. Anon sir Kay ran unto the fift king, and clave the helme and the head to the shoulders. And they set the queene in a barge in Humber, but alwayes queene Guenever praised sir Kay for his noble deedes. And therewith the queene departed. Then the king and the three knights rode into the forrest, and found the most part of his people, and told them all how the five kings were dead, 'and therefore let we hold us together till it be day, and when their hoast espic that their chiefetaines bee slaine they will make such sorrow that they shall not be able to helpe themselves.' Right so as the king had said, so it was; for when they found the five kings dead, they made such sorrow that they fell downe from their horses. Therewith came king Arthur with a few people, and slew on the right hand and on the left, that well nigh there escaped no man, but all were slaine, to the number of thirtie thousand men.

CHAP. LXI.—*How the battaile was finished or that king Pellinore came, and how king Arthur founded an abbey where the battaile was.*

THEREWITHALL came one to king Arthur, and told him that king Pellinore was within three mile. So within a while king Pellinore came with a great hoast, and saluted the people and the king. Then the king let reare and built in the same place there as the battaile was done a faire abbey, and let call it the abbey of Le Beave Adventure. And so the king

returned to Camelot in haste; and called king Pellinore unto him, and said: 'Yee understand wel that we have lost eight good knights of the table round, and by your advise wee will choose eight againe of the best that we may find in this court.' 'Sir,' said king Pellinore, 'I shall counsaile you after my conceite the best. Mee seemeth that king Urience, that hath wedded your sister, Morgan le Fay, the king of the lake, sir Hervise de Revel, and sir Galagars be foure right noble knights; and of young knights sir Gawaine, your nephew, sir Griflet¹ le Fise de Deue and sir Kay the seneshall be three most worshi:full and noble knights.' 'By my head,' said king Arthur, 'sir Kay is best worthie to bee a knight of the round table of any that ye have rehearsed, and he had done no more prowesse all the dayes of my life.'

CHAP. LXII.—*How sir Tor was made knight of the round table, and how Bagdemagus was displeased.*

THEN said king Pellinore, 'Now shal I put to you two knights, and ye shal choose which is most worthy, that is sir Bagdemagus² and sir Tor my sonne; but because sir Tor is my son, I may not praise him.' 'By my head,' said king Arthur, 'he is a passing good knight as any yee spake of this day, for I have seene him proved, and he saith little, but he doth much more; and therefore I will have him at this time, and leave sir Bagdemagus till another time.' And so were they set in their sieges, whereof sir Bagdemagus was wonderous wroth that sir Tor was so advanced afore him; and therefore sodainly he departed from the court of king Arthur, and tooke his squire with him, and rode long in a forrest, till they came to a crosse, and there he alighted and said his praiers devoutly. The meane while his squire found written upon the crosse that Bagdemagus should never returne againe to the court till hee had wonne a knights body of the round table, body for body. 'Lo, sir,' said his squire, 'heere I find written of you, therefore I bid you returne againe to the court.' 'That shall I never,' said Bagdemagus, 'til that I be worthie to bee a knight of the round table.' And so he rode foorth, and by the way he found a branch of an holy hearbe, that was the signe of the sancgreall; and no knight found such tokens but he were a good liver. So as sir Bagdemagus rode to se many adventures, it happened him to come to the roche there as the lady of the lake had put Merlin under a stone, and there hee heard him make great mone, wherefore sir Bagdemagus would have holpen him, and

¹ *Sir Griflet*—Caxton reads, *syre Gryflet le fyse the deue*.

² *Bagdemagus*.—This personage, called Baldemagus in the English metrical romance of Merlin, was the nephew of Urien.

went to the great stone, and it was so heavy that an hundred men might not lift it up. When Merlin wist that he was there, he bad him leave his labour, for he might never be holpen but by her that put him there. And so sir Bagdemagus departed, and did many adventures, and came againe to the court of king Arthur, and was made knight of the round table. And so on the morrow there fell new tidings and other adventures.

CHAP. LXIII.—*How king Arthur, king Urience, and sir Accolon of Gaule, chased an hart, and of their marvailous adventures.*

THEN it befell that king Arthur, king Urience, and sir Accolon of Gaule followed a great hart, and they chased so fast that within a while they three were ten mile from their fellowship, and at the last they chased so sore that they slew their horses under them. Then wer they al three on foot, and ever they saw the hart afore them passing weary and embushed. 'What will we doe?' said king Arthur, 'we are hard bested.' 'Let us goe on foote,' said king Urience, 'till we may meete with some lodging.' Then king Arthur looked about him, and saw afore him in a great water a little ship al apparelled with silke downe to the water, and the ship came straight unto them, and landed¹ on the sands. Then king Arthur went to the banck and looked in, and saw none earthly creature therein. 'Sirs,' said the king, 'come thence, and let us see what is in this ship.' So they went in all three, and found it richly behanged with cloath of silk, and, by that time it was darke night, there suddainly were about them an hundred torches set on all the sides of the shippe bords, and gave a great light. And therewith came out twelve faire damosels, and saluted king Arthur on their knees, and called him by his name, and said he was welcome. Therewith they led the king and his two fellowes into a faire chamber, and there was a cloth laid, and there they were served of all wines and meates, that the king had fared never better in his life for one supper. And so when they had supped at their leasure, king Arthur was led into a chamber, a richer bescene chamber saw he never none, and so was king Urience served, and led into another chamber, and sir Accolon was led into the third chamber, passing rich and well bescene. And on the morrow king Urience was in Camelot abed; and when he awak he had great mervaille how he came there, for on the even afore hee was about a two dayes journey from Camelot. And also when king Arthur awoke, he found himselte in a darke prison, hearing about him many complaints of wofull knights.

¹ *Landed*.—i.e. came to land.

CHAP. LXIV.—*How king Arthur tooke upon him to fight for to be delivered out of prison, and also to deliver twentie knights that wer in prison.*

THEN said king Arthur, 'What are ye that so complaine?' 'We are here twentie good knights prisoners,' said they, 'and some of us have lien here seaven yeere. The lord of this castle is named sir Damas, and he is the falsest knight that liveth, and hee hath a younger brother, a good knight of prowesse, his name is sir Ontzlake, and this traitor Damas, the elder brother, wil give him no part of his livelihood but that sir Ontzlake keepeth through his prowesse, and so he keepeth from him a full faire mannor and a rich, and therin sir Ontzlake dwelleth worshipfully, and is well beloved of the people and comminallty. And this sir Damas is as evil beloved; and great war hath bene between them both, but sir Ontzlake hath ever the better, and ever he proffereth sir Damas to fight for the livelihood¹, body for body, but he will doe nothing; or else to find a knight to fight for him. Unto that sir Damas hath granted to find a knight, but there is no knight that wil fight for him. And when sir Damas saw this, he hath dayly layen in a waite with many knights with him to take all the knights in this countrey to see and espie their adventures; and so hee tooke us severally as wee rode on our adventures, and many good knights have died in this prison for hunger, to the number of eighteene knights, and if any of us would have foughten with his brother Ontzlake, he would have delivered us; but we would never fight for him to die for it. And we be so leane for hunger, that unnethes we may stand on our feete.' 'God deliver you for His mercy!' said king Arthur. Anon therewith came a damosell unto king Arthur. 'Sir,' quoth she, 'and ye will fight for my lord, ye shall be delivered out of prison, or else ye shall never escape with your life.' 'Now,' said king Arthur, 'that is hard; yet had I rather to fight with a knight then to die in prison; and if I may be delivered with this and all these prisoners, I will doe the battaile. Me seemeth, damosell, I should have seene you in the court of king Arthur.' 'Nay,' said the damosell, 'I came never there, I am the lords daughter of this castle.' Yet was shce false, for she was one of the damosels of Morgan le Fay. Anon shee went unto sir Damas, and told him how hee would doe battaile for him. And so he sent for king Arthur, and, when hee came, hee was well coloured and well made of his limbes. So sir Damas and he were agreed that he should fight for him upon this covenant, that al the other knights should be delivered, and unto that was sir Damas sworne unto king Arthur, and also to doe this battaile to the uttermost. And with that all the twentie knights

¹ *For the livelihood*—i.e. for the property which sir Damas withheld from him.

were brought out of the darke prison into the hall and delivered. And so they all abode to see the battaile.

CHAP. LXV.—*How sir Accolon found himselfe by a well, and he tooke upon him to doe battaile against king Arthur.*

TURNE we unto sir Accolon of Gaule, that when he awoke he found himselfe by a deepe wel side, and there came out of that fountaine a pipe of silver, and out of that pipe ranne water all on high in stone of marble. And when sir Accolon saw this, hee blessed him and said, 'Jesus, save my lord king Arthur and king Urience ! for these damosells in this ship have betrayed us.' And with that there came a dwarfe with a great mouth and flat nose, and saluted sir Accolon, and said how he came from queene Morgan le Fay, 'and she greeteth you well, and biddeth you to bee strong of hart, for yee shall fight to morrow with a knight at the houre of prime, and therefore she hath sent you here Excalibur, king Arthurs sword, and the scabbard; and what damosell that bringeth her the knights head that ye shall fight withall, shee wil make her a rich queene for ever.' 'Now I understand you well,' said sir Accolon, 'Recommend me unto my lady queen Morgan, and tell her that all shall be done as I have promised her, or else I will die for it. Now, I suppose, she hath made all these crafts and enchantments for this battel.' Right so came a knight and a lady with sixe squires, and saluted sir Accolon, and praied him to arise, and come and rest him at his manor. And so sir Accolon mounted upon a voide horse, and went with the knight unto a faire manor by a priorie. Then sir Damas sent unto his brother sir Ontzlake, and bad him make ready by to-morrow at the houre of prime, and to be in the field, for he had found a good knight that was ready to doo battaile at al points. When this word came unto sir Ontzlake, he was passing heavie; but, for all hee was wounded, he would have taken the battell in hand. So it happened at that time by the meanes of Morgan le Fay, sir Accolon was lodged with sir Ontzlake, and when he heard of that battaile, and how sir Ontzlake was wounded, he said he would fight for him; and therewith sir Ontzlake sent word to his brother sir Damas, that he had a knight that for him should be ready in the field by the houre of prime. And when masse was doone, there came a squire and asked sir Damas, if his knight were ready; 'for our knight is ready in the field.' And as king Arthur was upon horsebacke, there came a damosell from Morgan le Fay, and brought unto king Arthur a sword like unto Excalibur and the scabbard, and said unto king Arthur, 'Morgan le Fay sendeth you here your sword for great love.' And he thanked her, and wend it had beene so; but she was false, for the sword and the scabbard was counterfeited, brittle, and false.

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 ●CHAP. LXVI.—*Of the battaile betweene king Arthur and sir Accolon.*

AND then they dressed them on both parties of the field, and let their horses run so fast, that either smote other in the midst of their shields with their speares, that both horses and men went to the ground; and then they started up both and drew out their swords. And in the meane while that they were thus fighting came the damosel of the lake into the field, that had put Merlin under the stone, and she came thither for the love of king Arthur, for she knew how Morgan le Fay had so ordained that king Arthur should have been slaine that day, and therefore she came to save his life. And so they went eagerly to doe their battaile, and gave manie great strokes. But alway king Arthurs sword was not like sir Accolons sword, so that for the most part every strooke that sir Accolon gave wounded king Arthur sore, that it was marvaile that he stood, and alway his blood fell fast from him. When king Arthur beheld the ground so sore beblooded¹, hee was dismaied, and then he deemed treason that his sword was changed, for ever him seemed that the sword in sir Accolons hand was Excalibur, for at every strooke that sir Accolon strooke, he drew blood on king Arthur. And sir Accolon lost not a drop of blood, therefore he waxed passing light; and king Arthur was passing feeble, and thought verily to have died. But al men that beheld them said they saw never knight fight so well as did king Arthur, considering the blood that he bled. Then alway they fought together as fierce knights, and king Arthur withdrew him a little for to rest him, and sir Accolon called him to battaile, and said, 'It is no time for me to suffer thee to rest.' And therewith he came fiersly upon king Arthur, and king Arthur smote sir Accolon upon the helme so mightily that hee made him nigh fall to the earth, and therewith king Arthurs sword brak at the crosse² and fel in the grasse among the blood, and the pomell and the handle he held in his hand.

CHAP. LXVII.—*How king Arthurs sword that he fought with brake, and how he recovered of sir Accolon his owne sword Excalibur, and overcame his enemye.*

THEN sir Accolon began to say thus with words of treason: 'Knight, thou art overcome and maist no longer endure; therefore yeeld thee to mee as recreaunt.' 'Nay,' said king Arthur, 'I may not so, for I have promised to doe the battaile to the uttermost by the faith of my body while my life lasteth.'

¹ *Beblooded*.—Covered with blood. The use of the prefix *be* in an intensive or distributive sense is very common in this book, and it will be hardly necessary to point it out except in particular instances where the passage requires explanation.

² *Crosse*.—The piece of metal which crossed the sword above the handle, to guard the hand.

'Now keepe thee from me,' said sir Accolon, 'for thou art but a dead man.' But king Arthur pressed unto Sir Accolon with his shield, and gave him with the pomell in his hand such a buffet that he went three strides back. When the damosell of the lake beheld king Arthur she had great pittie that so good a knight should be destroyed. And at the next strooke sir Accolon strooke him by the damosels enchauntment the sword Excalibur fell out of sir Accolons hand to the earth. And therewith king Arthur lightly leapt to it, and quickly gate it in his hand, and forthwith he perceived clearly that it was his good sword Excalibur, and suddenly hee leapt to sir Accolon and pulled the scabbard from him, and anon threw it from him as farre as he might throw it. And therewith king Arthur rushed upon him with all his might, and pulled him to the earth, and then rushed off his helme. 'Now will I sley thee,' said king Arthur. 'Sley me yee may,' said sir Accolon, 'and it please you, for ye are the best knight that ever I found.' And then king Arthur remembered him, and thought he should have seene this knight. 'Now tel me,' said king Arthur, 'of what countrey art thou? and of what court?' 'Sir knight,' quoth sir Accolon, 'I am of the court of king Arthur, and my name is sir Accolon of Gaule.' Then king Arthur remembered him of his sister Morgan le Fay, and of the enchantment of the ship. 'Oh, sir knight,' said he, 'I pray thee tell me who gave thee this sword and by whom had ye it?'

CHAP. LXVIII.—*How sir Accolon confessed the treason of Morgan le Fay, and how she would have caused her brother king Arthur to be slaine.*

'NOW sir,' said sir Accolon, 'I wil tel you. This sword hath beene in my keeping the most of these twelve monethes, and queene Morgan le Fay sent it me yesterday by a dwarfe to this intent, that I should sley king Arthur her brother. Also she loveth me out of measure, and I her againe. And if she might bring about for to sley king Arthur with her crafts, she would sley her husband king Urience lightly, and then had she me devised to be king in this land, and she to be my queene, and now have I told you the truth, wherefore I pray you that ye will tell me of whence ye are, and of what court?' 'Oh, sir Accolon,' said king Arthur, 'now I let thee to wit that I am king Arthur, to whom thou hast done great damage.' When sir Accolon heard that, he cried out aloud: 'Oh, my gracious lord, have mercy on me, for I knew you not!' 'Oh, sir Accolon,' said king Arthur, 'mercy shalt thou have, because I feele by thy words at this time thou knewest not my person.' Then king Arthur called the keepers of the field, and said, 'Sirs, come hither, for here we be two knights that have fought unto a great damage to us both; and had any of us knowen

other, here had beene no battaile nor stroke stricken.' Then al aloud cried sir Accolon 'Oh, my lords, this noble knight that I have fought withall, which me full sore repenteth, is the most man of prowesse, of manhood, and of worship that in all the world liveth, for it is himselfe king Arthur, and with great mishap and great misadventure have I done this battaile against my king and lord.'

CHAP. LXIX.—*How king Arthur accorded the two brethren, and delivered the twentie knights, and how sir Accolon died.*

THEN all the people fell downe on their knees, and cried king Arthur mercie. 'Mercie shall ye have,' said king Arthur; 'here may ye see what adventures befalleth oftentimes to erraunt knights; how I have fought with one of mine owne knights. But, sirs, ye shall understand my opinion betweene you two brethren. As to thee, sir Damas, I will that ye give unto your brother all the whole manor with the appurtenance under this maner of forme, that sir Ontzlake hold the manor of you, and yearely to give you a palfrey to ride upon, for that will become you better to ride on then on a courser. Also, that thou restore these twentie knights which thou hast long kept in prison of all their harneis, and that thou content them, and if any of them come to my court and complaine of thee, by my head thou shalt die therefore. Also, sir Ontzlake, as to you, because ye are named a good knight and ful of prowesse, and true and gentle in all your deedes, this shal be your charge. I will that ye come to my court, and ye shal be a knight of mine, and if your deedes be therafter, I shall so advance you by the grace of God that ye shall in short time be in case for to live as worshipfully as doth your brother sir Damas.' 'God thanke you of your largesse and of your great goodnesse,' said sir Ontzlake, 'and I promise you that from hencefoorth I shall be at all times at your commandement.' 'I would fain be at some place of worship,' said king Arthur, 'that I might rest my selfe.' 'Sir,' said sir Ontzlake, 'heereby is a rich abbey of nuns of our¹ elders foundation, but three miles hence.' So then the king tooke his leave of all the people, and mounted on horseback, and sir Accolon with him. And when they were come to the abbey, he let fetch surgions and leeches² for to search³ his wounds, and sir Accolons both; but sir Accolon died within foure dayes after. And when sir Accolon was dead, king Arthur let send him on horsbacke with sixe knights to Camelot, and said, 'Beare him to my sister Morgan le Fay, and

¹ *Our*.—*Your*, Caxton.

² *Leeches*.—Physicians. *Surgions* is not found in Caxton's text; it was a word then in more common use.

³ *To search*.—To probe; to examine.

say that I send him hir for a present, and tel her that I have my sword Excalibur and the scabbard.' So they departed with the body.

CHAP. LXX.—*How Morgan le Fay would have slaine king Urience her husband, and how sir Ewaine her sonne saved him.*

THE meane while Morgan le Fay had wend that king Arthur had beene dead. So on a day she espied king Urience how he lay in his bed sleeping, then she called unto her a damosel of her counsel, and said, 'Goe fetch me my lords sword, for I saw never better time to sley him then now.' Then the damosel departed, and went unto sir Ewaine and wakned him, and bad him 'arise and waite upon my lady your mother, for she will sley the king your father sleeping in his bed, for I goe to fetch her his sword.' 'Well,' said sir Ewaine, 'goe on your way, and let me deale.' Anon the damosell brought the sword unto Morgan with quaking hands, and shee lightly tooke the sword and drew it out, and went boldly to the beds side; and as she lift up the sword for to smite, sir Ewaine¹ lept unto his mother and caught her by the hand, and said, 'Ah! fiend, what wilt thou doe? and thou were not my mother, with this sword I would smite off thy head.' 'Oh, faire sonne Ewaine,' said Morgan, 'have mercy upon me, I was tempted with a divell, wherefore I crie thee mercy, I wil never more doe so, and save my worship and discover me not.' 'On this covenant,' said sir Ewaine, 'I wil forgive you, so you wil never be about to do such deeds.' 'Nay, son,' said she, 'and therto I mak you assurance.'

CHAP. LXXI.—*How Morgan le Fay made great sorrow for the death of sir Accolon, and how she stole away from king Arthur the scabbard.*

THEN came tidings unto Morgan le Fay that sir Accolon was dead, and his body brought to the church, and how king Arthur had his sword againe. But because she would not that it were knowen, she kept her countenance outward, and made no semblance of sorrow. But well she wist and if she abode till her brother Arthur came thither, there should no gold save her life. So, early on the morrow, she tooke her horse and rode all that day and the most part of the night, and on the morrow by noone she came to the same abbey of nuns wher as king Arthur lay, and she knowing that he was there, she asked where he was. And they answered, 'That he had lain him downe in his bed to sleepe, for he had had but little rest these three nights.' 'Well,' said she, 'I charge you that none of you

¹ Sir Ewayne—*Syr Unwayne*, Caxton.

'awake him till I awake him my selfe.' And then she alight from her horse, and thought to steale away Excalibur, and so she went straight unto his chamber, and there she found king Arthur asleepe in his bed, and Excalibur in his right hand naked. When she saw that, she was passing heauey that she might not come by his sword. Then she tooke the scabbard, and went her way on horsebacke. When the king awoke and missed his scabbard, he was wonderous wroth, and asked who had beene there. And they said his sister queene Morgan had beene there, and had put the scabbard under her mantell, and was gone. 'Alas !' said king Arthur, 'falsely have ye watched me. Nowe let fetch the best horse that may be found, and bid sir Ontzlake arme him in all haste, and take another good horse, and ride with me.'

So anon the king and sir Ontzlake were well armed, and rode after this lady. And as they rode they came by a crosse, and found a cowheard, and they asked the poore man if there came any lady late riding that way. 'Sir,' said this poore man, 'right late came a lady riding with fortie horses, and to yonder forrest she rode.' Then within a while king Arthur had a sight of her, that he chased as fast as he might. And when she saw she might not escape, she rode unto a lake thereby, where she let throw the scabbard in the deepest of the water, and it sunke, for it was so heauey of gold and precious stones. Then she shop¹ herself, horse and man, by enchantment, into a great marble stone. So anon king Arthur and sir Ontzlake came, wheras the knight might know his sister and her men. 'Ah,' said the king, 'here may ye see the vengeance of God, and now I am sorrie that this misadventure is befallen.' And then he looked for the scabbard, but it could not be found. So he returned again to the abbey that he came from. When king Arthur was gone, she turned all into the likenesse as she and they were before, and said, 'Sirs, now may we goe wheresoeuer we will, for my brother Arthur is gone.'

CHAP. LXXII.—*How Morgan le Fay saved a knight that should have beene drowned, and how king Arthur returned home againe to Camelot.*

THEN said Morgan, 'Saw ye my brother sir Arthur?' 'Ye,' said her knights, 'right wel, and that ye should have found and we might have stirred from one steede, for by his armivestall² countenance he would have caused us to have fled.' Anon after shee rode, she met with a knight leading another knight on his horse before him, bound hand and foote blindfold. Then shee asked what hee would doe with that knight. 'Lady,' said he, 'I will drowne him.'

¹ *Shop*.—Shaped, i. e. transformed.

² *Armivestall*.—warlike; fierce.

'That were pittie,' said Morgan. 'Now what say you, ye knight?' said she to the knight that should be drowned. 'Of whence be yee? and of what countrey?' 'I am of the court of king Arthur, and my name is Manassen, cosin unto sir Accolon of Gaule.' 'Ye say well,' said she, 'and for the love of him ye shal be delivered, ye shall have your adversary in the same case that ye be in.' And so Manassen was loosed, and the other knight bound. And anon Manassen unarmed him, and armed himselfe in his harneis, and so mounted on horseback, and the knight afore him, and so threw him into the fountaine and drowned him. And so queene Morgan departed and went into the countrey of Gore¹, and made her castles and townes passing strong, for alwayes she dred much king Arthur. When king Arthur had well rested him at that abbey, he rode to Camelot, and found his queene and his barons right glad of his comming. And when they heard of his strange adventures they all had mervaile of the falsehood of Morgan le Fay, and many knights wished her brent. Then came Manassen to the court, and told the king of his adventure. So on the morrow there came a damosell from Morgan to the king, and shee brought with her the richest mantell that ever was seene in the court, for it was set as ful of precious stones as might stand one by another, and there were the richest stones that ever the king saw. And the damosell said, 'Your sister sendeth you this mantell, and desireth you that yee will take this gift of her, and in what thing shee hath offended you, she will amend it at your owne pleasure.'

CHAP. LXXIII.—*How the damosell of the lake saved king Arthur from a mantell which should have brent him.*

AND with that came the damosel of the lake unto the king, and said, 'Sir, put not on you this mantell, till ye commaund the bringer thereof to put it upon her.' 'Well,' said king Arthur, 'it shall be done as you counsaile me.' And then he said unto the damosell that came from his sister, 'Damosell, this mantell that ye have brought me, I will see it upon you.' 'Sir,' said she, 'it will not beseeme me to weare a knights² garment.' 'By my head,' said king Arthur, 'ye shall weare it or it come on my backe, or on any man that heere is;' and so the king made it be put upon her; and foorthwith she fell downe dead, and never more spake word after, and was brent to coles³.

¹ *Gore*.—This country may perhaps be intended for the district of Gower in North Wales.

² *A knyges*, Caxton.

³ *Coles*.—Coal, in the middle Ages, meant always charcoal; the phrase here used is equivalent to, burnt to cinders.

Then was the king wondrous wroth, and said unto king Urience, 'My sister, your wife, is alway about to betray me, but I deeme not that ye be of her counsaile, for sir Accolon confessed to me that she should have destroyed you as well as me, therefore I hold you excused; but as for your sonne sir Ewaine, I hold him suspect, therefore I charge you put him out of my court.' So sir Ewaine was charged. And when sir Gawaine¹ wist of it, he made him ready to goe with him, and said, 'Who so banished my cosin Ewaine, shall banish me.' So they two departed; and so they came to an abbey of monkes, and there were well lodged. So on the morrow they² hard masse in the abbey, and so they rode forth till they came to a great forrest; then was sir Gawaine ware in a valey by a turret of twelve faire damosels, and two knights armed, upon two great horses, and the damosels went to and fro by a tree. And then was sir Gawaine ware how there hung a white shield on that tree, and ever as the damosels came by it, they spet upon it, and some threw mire upon it.

CHAP. LXXIV.—*How sir Gawaine and sir Ewaine met with twelve faire damosels, and how they complained upon sir Marhaus.*

THEN sir Gawaine and sir Ewaine went and saluted them, and asked why they did that despite to the shield. 'Sirs,' said the damosels, 'there is a knight in this country that oweth³ this white shield, and he is a passing good knight of his hands, but he hateth all ladies and gentlewomen, and therefore we doe all this despite to the white shield.' 'I shall say to you,' said sir Gawaine to the ladies, 'it beseemeth evill a good knight to despise all ladies and gentlewomen: now what is his name?' 'Sir,' said they, 'his name is Marhaus⁴, the kings sonne of Ireland.' 'Ah,' said sir Gawaine, 'damosels, me thinketh ye are to blame. I will abide no longer to see a knights shield dishonoured.' And therewith sir Ewaine and sir Gawaine departed a little from them, and then were they ware where sir Marhaus came riding upon a great horse strait toward them. And when the twelve damosels saw sir Marhaus, they fled into the turret as they had beene wilde, so that some of them fell by the way. Then the knights of the turret ran together against sir Marhaus; but hee smote them both so hard that they were soone smitten downe starke dead.

¹ *Gawaine*.—The text of the edition of 1634 reads here *Ewaine*, but Caxton has correctly, *Syr Gawayne*.

² *They*.—i. e. Ewaine and Gawaine.

³ *Oweth*.—i. e. owneth.

⁴ *Marhaus*.—Of this personage, who is called Morhoult in the French prose romance of sir Tristan, a further account will be found in the second part of the present work.

CHAP. LXXV.—*How sir Marhaus justed with sir Gawaine and sir Ewaine, and overthrew them both.*

AND then sir Marhaus rode unto his shield, and saw how it was defowled, and said, 'Of this despit I am a part avenged, but for her love that gave me this white shield I shal were thee, and hang mine here in thy steed.' And so hee hung it about his neck¹, and then he rode straight to sir Gawaine and sir Ewaine, and asked them what they did there. They answered that they came from king Arthurs court for to seeke adventures. 'Well,' said Marhaus, 'heere am I ready, a knight adventurous, that wil fulfill any adventure that yee will desire of me.' And so departed from them to fetch his raunge. 'Well,' said sir Ewaine, 'I will assay him afore you, for I am more weaker than ye are, and if he smite me downe then may ye revenge me.' So these two knights came together with great raundon, that sir Marhaus smote sir Ewaine so sore that horse and man he bare to the earth, and hurt him on the left side. Then sir Marhaus turned his horse, and rode toward sir Gawaine, and they came together with all the might of their horses, that either knight smote other so hard in the middest of their two shields that sir Gawaines speare brake, and therewith sir Gawaine and his horse rushed downe to the earth, and lightly sir Gawaine arose upon his feete, and dressed him toward sir Marhaus on foote. And therewith sir Marhaus alighted, and either came to other egerly, and they brused their helmes and their hawberks, and wounded either other. But sir Gawaine, fro it passed nine of the clock, waxed ever stronger and stronger, for then it came to the houre of noone, and thrice his might was increased. And when it was past noon and drew toward evensong time, sir Gawaines strength waxed passing faint, that unneth he might not endure any longer; and sir Marhaus waxed bigger and bigger. 'Sir knight,' said sir Marhaus, 'I have well felt that ye are a passing good knight, and a marvailous man of might as ever I felt any, and our quarrels are not great, and therefore it were pittie to do you hurt, for I perceive ye are passing feeble.' 'Ah,' said sir Gawaine, 'gentle knight, ye say the words that I should say.' And therewith they tooke off their helmes, and either kissed other, and there they swore together either to love other as brethren. And sir Marhaus prayed sir Gawaine to lodge with him that night. And so they tooke their horses and rode toward sir Marhaus place. And so they had there good lodging with sir Marhaus. For when he wist that they were king Arthurs sister sonnes, he made them all the cheere that lay in his power. And so they sojourned there about a seaven nights,

¹ *About his neck.*—This was the usual manner of carrying the shield when not in actual use.

and at the last departed. 'Now,' said sir Marhaus, 'we will not depart so lightly, for I will bring you through the forrest;' and rode day by day well a seaven dayes or they found any adventure. So long they rode till they came into a deepe valey full of stones, and therby they saw a faire fountaine, and three damosels sitting thereby. And then they rode unto them, and either saluted other, and the eldest had a garland of gold about her head, and shee was threescore winters of age or more, and her haire was white under the garland. The second damosel was of thirtie winters of age, with a serklet¹ of gold about her head. The third damosell was but fiteene yeares of age, and she had a garland of flowers about her head. When these knights had well beholden them, they asked them the cause why they sate at that fountaine. 'We be heere,' said the damosels, 'for this cause: if we may see any erraunt knights, to teach them unto strange adventures, and ye be three knights that seeken adventures, and therefore each of you must choose one of us; and when ye have done so, we will leade you unto three high waies, and there each of you shall choose a way, and his damosell with him; and this day twelve monethes yee must meete heere againe and God spare you your lives, and thereto ye must plight your troth.'

CHAP. LXXVI.—*How sir Marhaus, sir Gawaine, and Ewaine met three damosels, and each of them tooke one.*

HOW shall we choose every each of us a damosel?' said sir Marhaus. 'I shal tel you,' said sir Ewaine; 'I am the youngest and most weakest of you both, therefore I will have the eldest damosell, for she hath seene much and can helpe me best when I have neede, for I have most neede of helpe of you both.' Then said sir Marhaus, 'I will have the damosell of thirtie winters of age, for she falleth best to me.' Then said sir Gawaine, 'I thanke you, for ye have left me the youngest and the fairest, and she is most levest to me.' Then every damosell tooke her knight, and brought them to the three wayes, and they kist and departed, and each knight set his lady behind him. Now wil we begin at sir Gawaine, that held his way till he came to a faire mannor, where as dwelleth an old knight and a good housholder, and there sir Gawaine demanded of the old knight if he knew any adventures in that countrey. 'I shall shew you some to-morrow,' said the old knight, 'and that marvailous.' So on the morrow they rode into the forrest of adventures, til they came to a laund, and thereby they found a crosse, and as they stood and hoved², there came by them the fairest knight and the seemeliest man that ever they saw, making the greatest moane that ever man made.

¹ *Serklet*.—A wreath, or band, for the head.

² *Hoved*.—Hovered; halted.

CHAP. LXXVII.—*How a knight and a dwarfe strove for a lady.* “

THEN sir Gawaine saw ten knights that hoved still, and made them ready against that one knight that came by sir Gawaine. Then this one knight adventred a great speare, and one of the ten knights encountred with him, but this wofull knight smote him so hard that he fel over the horse taile. So this dolorous knight served them all, and smote them downe horse and man, and all he did it with one speare. And when they were all ten on foote, they went to that one knight, and he stood ston stil and suffered them to pull him down off his horse, and bound him hand and foote, and tyed him under his horse belly, and so led him with them. ‘Sir,’ said the damosell unto sir Gawaine, ‘me seemeth that it were your worship and honour to helpe that dolorous knight, for me thinketh he is one of the best knights that ever I saw.’ ‘I would be glad to doe for him,’ said sir Gawaine, ‘but it seemeth that he wil have no helpe.’ Right thus as they talked, they saw a knight on that other side of the laund, all armed save the head, and a dwarfe on horsebacke all armed save the head, with a great mouth and a short nose. And the dwarfe came nigh to the knight and said, ‘Where is the lady that should meete us heere?’ And therewithall she came forth out of the wood. And then they began to strive for the lady. ‘Wil ye doe wel?’ said the dwarfe; ‘yonder is a knight at the crosse, let us put it to his judgement, and as he deemeth even so be it.’ And then they went all three unto sir Gawaine, and told him wherefore they two strove. ‘Now, damosell,’ said sir Gawaine, ‘ye shall stand betweene them both, and whether ye list better to goe to, he shall have you.’ And so when the damosell was set betweene them both, she left the knight and went to the dwarfe. And the dwarfe tooke her, and went his way singing; and the knight went his way with great mourning. Then came there two knights all armed, and cried on high, ‘Sir Gawaine! knight of king Arthur, make thee ready in all hast and just with me.’ So they ran together that either fell downe; and then on foote they drew their swords and did full actually. In the meane while the other knight went unto the damosell, and asked her why she abode with that knight, and ‘if ye would abide with me, I wil be your faithfull knight.’ ‘And with you will I be,’ said the damosell, ‘for with sir Gawaine I may not find in mine hart to bee with him; for now here was one knight that discomfited ten knights, and at the last hee was cowardly led away; and therefore let us two goe our way while they fight.’ And sir Gawaine fought with that other knight long, but at the last they were both accorded; and then the knight prayed sir Gawaine to lodge with him that night. So as sir Gawaine went with this knight, he demaunded him: ‘What knight is he in this cuntry that smot down the ten knights? for when

he had done so manfully, he suffered them to bind him hand and foote, and so led him away.' 'Ah,' said the knight, 'that is the best knight I trow in the world, and he hath beene served so as he was even now more then ten times; and he is named sir Pelleas, and he loveth a great lady in this countrey, and her name is Ettarde, and so when hee loved her, there was cried in this countrey a great justes three daies; and all the knights of this countrey were there, and also the gentlewomen, and who that proved him the best knight should have a passing good sword and a serklet of gold, and the serklet the knight should give it to the fairest lady that was at those justes. And this knight sir Pelleas was the best knight that was there. And every day of the three dayes he strooke down twentie knights, therfore they gave him the price. And foorthwithall he went there as the lady Ettarde was, and gave her the serklet, and said openly that she was the fairest lady that was there, and that would he prove upon any knight that would say nay.

CHAP. LXXVIII.—*How king Pelleas suffered himselfe to be taken prisoner because he would have a sight of his lady, and how sir Gawaine promised him for to get to him the love of his lady.*

AND so this knight promised the lady Ettarde to follow her into this countrey, and never to leave her till she loved him. And thus he is here the most part nigh her, and lodgeth by a priorie, and every weeke she sendeth knights to fight with him; and when he hath put them to the worst, then will he suffer them wilfully to take him prisoner, because he would have a sight of this lady. Thus in the most shamefullest wise that she can thinke he is brought to her.' 'Alas!' said sir Gawaine, 'it is great pittie of him; and in the morning I will goe seeke him, to doe him all the helpe that I can.' So on the morrow sir Gawaine tooke his leave of his hoast sir Carodos, and rode into the forrest. And at the last hee met with sir Pelleas, and asked him why he made such sorrow. And as it is above rehearsed, sir Pelleas told to sir Gawaine. 'Now,' said sir Gawaine, 'leave off your mourning, and I shall promise you by the faith of my body to doe all that lieth in my power to get you the love of your lady, and thereto I will plight you my troth.' 'Ah, my good friend,' said sir Pelleas, 'of what court are ye; I pray you that you will tell me?' And then sir Gawaine said, 'I am of the court of king Arthur, and am his sisters sonne; and king Lot of Orkeney was my father, and my name is sir Gawaine.' And then hee said, 'My name is sir Pelleas, born in the Isles, and of many isles I am lord, and never have I loved lady nor damosell till now in an unhappie time; and, sir knight, sith ye are so nigh cosin unto king Arthur and a kings sonne, therefore I pray thee betray me not.' 'I wil have your horse and your armour,'

said sir Gawaine, 'and so will I ride to her castle, and tell her that I have slaine you, and so shal I come within to her to cause her to cherish me, and then I shall doe my true part, that yee shall not faile to have her love.'

CHAP. LXXIX.—*How sir Gawaine came to the lady Ettarde, and how sir Pelleas went to Ettardes pavilion.*

AND therewithall sir Gawaine plight his troth unto sir Pelleas to be true and faithfull unto him. When they had plight their troth the one to the other, they changed horses and harneis, and sir Gawaine departed, and came to the castle where as stood the pavilions of this lady without the gate; and as soone as Ettarde had espied sir Gawaine, she fled toward the castle. Then sir Gawaine spake on high, and bad her abide, for he was not sir Pelleas, 'I am another knight that hath slaine sir Pelleas.' 'Doe off your helme,' said the lady Ettarde, 'that I may behold your visage.' And when she saw it was not sir Pelleas, she made him to alight, and led him unto her castle, and asked him faithfully whether he had slaine sir Pelleas. And he said, yea. And then sir Gawaine told her that his name was sir Gawaine, and of the court of king Arthur, and his sisters sonne. 'Truely,' said she, 'that is great pittie, for hee was a passing good knight of his body, but of all men on live I hated him most, for I could never be quiet for him.' Then sir Gawaine said that he loved a lady, and by no meanes she would love him. 'She is to blame,' said Ettarde, 'and she wil not love you, for that ye be so well borne a man and such a man of prowesse, there is no lady in this world too good for you.' 'Will ye,' said sir Gawaine, 'promise me to doe all that ye may doe to get me the love of my lady?' 'Yea, sir,' said she, 'and that I promise you.' 'Now,' said sir Gawaine, 'it is your selfe that I love so well, therefore I pray you hold your promise.' 'I may not choose,' said the lady Ettarde, 'but if I should be forsworne.' And then it was in the moneth of May, that she and sir Gawaine went out of the castle and supped in a pavilion; for then she had no dread nor feare of sir Pelleas. And on the third day in the morning early sir Pelleas armed him, for he had not slept sith that sir Gawaine departed from him; for sir Gawaine had promised him by the faith of his body to come unto him to his pavilion by the priory within the space of a day and a night. Then sir Pelleas mounted on horsebacke, and came to the pavilions that stood without the castle, and found in the third pavilion the serklet of gold which he had given to the lady, and the shield of sir Gawaine; and, as he looked on them, his heart almost brast for sorrow. Then he thought he might no longer abide; but at the last he placed the ladys golden serklet beside sir Gawaines shield, and laid his drawen

Sword overthwart them both : and then hee tooke his horse, and rod foorth his way, making great and wofull lamentation. And when sir Pelleas came to his pavilions, he told his knights and squires how he had sped, and said thus to them : 'For your true and faithfull service that you have done to me, I shall give you all my goods, for I will goe unto my bed and never arise untill I be dead. And when I am dead, I charge you that ye take the heart of my body, and beare it unto her betweene two silver dishes.' Right so sir Pelleas unarmed himselfe, and went to his bed, making the greatest sorrow that ever man heard. And then sir Gawaine and the lady Ettard came to the pavilion, and found the naked sword overthwart the lady Ettardes serklet and sir Gawaines shield. Then she knew wel that it was sir Pelleas sword. 'Alas !' said she to sir Gawaine, 'ye have betraied me and sir Pelleas also, for yee told me that yee had slaine him, and now I know well it is not so, he is on live.' And therewith sir Gawaine went into the forrest. Then it hapned that the damosell of the lake, Nimue, met with a knight of sir Pelleas, which went on foote in the forrest making great mone, and she asked him the cause of his sorrow. Then the woful knight told her how that his master and lord was betraied through a knight and a lady, and how he would never arise out of his bed til he were dead. 'Bring me to him anon, and I wil warrant his life, that he shall not die for love ; and shee that hath caused him to love, she shall be in as evill a plite as he is now or it bee long, for it is no joy of such a presumptuous lady that wil have no mercy of such a valiant knight.' Anon the knight brought her unto his lord and master. And therewith shee threw an enchantment upon him, and he fel on sleepe. And so she brought the lady Ettard thither, and found him on sleepe. 'Loe,' said the damosell of the lake, 'ye ought to be ashamed to murder such a knight.' And therewith she cast such an enchantment upon her, that shee loved him out of measure, that well nigh shee was out of her mind¹. And then anon sir Pelleas awoke, and looked upon the lady Ettard. And when he saw her, he knew her, and then hee hated her more then any woman alive, and said, 'Goe thy way hence, thou traitresse, come no more in my sight.' And when she heard him say so, she wept, and made great sorow out of measure.

CHAP. LXXX.—*How sir Pelleas loved no more the lady Ettard by the meanes of the damosell of the lake, whom he loved ever after during his life.*

'SIR knight Pelleas,' said the damosell of the lake, 'take your horse, and come with me out of this countrey, and yee shall have a lady that shall love you.' 'I will well,' said sir Pel-

¹ *Out of her mind.*—This incident reminds us of a scene in Shakespeare's 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' the idea of which may perhaps have been suggested by it.

leas, 'for the lady Ettard hath done me great dispite and shame.' Anon sir Pelleas armed him, and tooke his horse, and commanded his men to bring after his pavilions and his stuff where as the damosell of the lake would assigne. So the lady Ettard died for sorrow, and the damosell of the lake rejoiced sir Pelleas, and loved together during their lives.

CHAP. LXXXI. — *How sir Marhaus rode with the damosell, and how he came to the duke of the South Marches.*

NOW returne we unto sir Marhaus, that rode with the damosell of thirtie winters of age into a deepe forrest, and at the last they came unto a courtlage, and there they demanded harbour¹. But the man of the courtlage would not harbour them; but thus much the good man said: 'And ye wil tak the adventure of your lodging, I shall bring you there yee shall bee lodged.' So within an houre the good man brought him unto a faire castle. And anon he was let into the castle, and forthwith hee shewed to the lord how hee had brought him a knight erraunt and a damosell that would bee lodged with him. 'Let him come in,' said the lord, 'it may happen that they shall repent that they tooke their lodging here in this castle.' So sir Marhaus was let in with torch light, and there was a goodly sight of young men that welcomed him. And then his horse was led into the stable, and he and his damosell were brought into the hall, and there stood a mightie duke and many goodly men about him. Then this lord asked him how he hight, and from whence he came, and with what man hee dwelled. 'Sir,' said he, 'I am a knight of king Arthurs, and knight of the table round, and my name is sir Marhaus, and I am borne in Ireland.' And then said the duke unto him, 'That me sore repenteth, and the cause is this. I love not thy lord, nor none of all thy fellows that be of the table round, and therefore ease thy selfe this night as well as thou mayest, for to morrow I and mysix sonnes shall match with thee, if God will.' 'Sir, I require you,' said sir Marhaus, 'that ye will tell me, if it please you, what your name is?' 'Wit ye will that I am the duke of the Southmarches.' 'Ah,' said sir Marhaus, 'I have heard say that ye have beene a long time a great foe unto my lord king Arthur, and to his knights.' 'That shall ye feele to morrow,' said the duke. 'Shall I have adoe with you?' said sir Marhaus. 'Yea,' said the duke, 'thereof thou shalt not choosc, therefore take thee to thy chamber, where thou shalt have all that to thee belongeth.' So sir Marhaus departed, and was led to a chamber, and his damosell was also led to her chamber. And on the morrow the duke sent to sir Marhaus, that he should make him ready. And so

¹ Harbour.—i. e. a lodging. A *courtelage* was properly a courtyard, or the inclosure of a house.

sir Marhaus arose, and armed him, and then there was a masse sung afore him, and after brake his fast, and so mounted on horsebacke in the court of the castle where they should doe the battaile. So there was the duke all ready on horsebacke cleane armed, and his sixe sonnes by him, and every each had a speare in his hand, and so they encountred, whereas the duke and two of his sonnes brake their speares upon him, but sir Marhaus held up his speare, and touched none of them.

CHAP. LXXXII.—*How sir Marhaus fought with the duke and his sixe sonnes, and made them to yeeld them.*

THEN came the foure sonnes of the duke by couples, and two of them brake their speares, and so did the other two. And all this while sir Marhaus did not touch them. Then sir Marhaus ranne to the duke, and so smote him with his speare, that horse and man fell to the earth, and so he served his sonnes. Then when the duke saw he might not escape death, hec cried to his sonnes, and charged them to yeeld them unto sir Marhaus. And they kneeled all downe, and put the pomels of their swords unto sir Marhaus, and he received them. And then they holpe their father; and there by a common assent promised unto sir Marhaus never to be foes unto king Arthur, and thereupon, at Pentecost¹ after, he to come and his sixe sonnes and put them in the kings grace. Then sir Marhaus departed, and within two daies his damosell brought him where as was a great turnament that the lady de Vause had cried, and who that did best should have a rich serklet of gold worth a thousand besaunts². And there sir Marhaus did so nobly that hec was renowned to have smitten downe fortie knights, and so the serklet of gold was rewarded him. And within seven dayes after, the damosell brought him to an carles place, whose name was called Fergus, which after was sir Tristrams knight. And this carle was but a young man and late come to his lands, and there was a giant fast by him that hight Taulurd, and he had a brother in Cornewaile that hight Taulas, that sir Tristram slew when he was out of his minde. So on the morrow sir Marhaus prayed the carle that one of his men might bring him where as the giant was, and he saw him sit under an holy tree, and many clubbes of iron and gisarmes³ about him. So sir Marhaus dressed him to the giant, and the giant stert to a club of iron, and came against sir Marhaus as fast as he might drive; and at the first strooke he clave sir Marhaus shield all to peeces, and light on a stone and frused⁴ it into the earth, and there he

¹ *Pentecost*.—Caxton's text says, *Whytsontyde*.

² *Besaunts*.—A gold coin, named from Byzantium, or Constantinople, of which it is understood to have been the coinage. Its value varied at different times.

³ *Gisarmes*.—The gisarme was a sort of bill or battle-axe.

⁴ *Frused*.—Bruised or crushed. This incident of the stone is not found in Caxton.

was in great perill, for the giant was a wilely fighter; but at the last sir Marhaus smote off his right arme above the elbow. Then the giant fled, and the knight after him, and so hec drove him to a water; and so was he there drowned. Then sir Marhaus went to the giants castle, and there he delivered out of the giants prison twentie foure ladies, and twentie two¹ knights, and ther he had riches without number; so that all the dayes of his life he was never poore man after. So sir Marhaus dwelled with the carle nigh halfe a yeere, for he was sore bruised with the giant, and at the last he tooke his leavc. And as he rode by the way, he met with sir Gawaine and sir Ewaine; and so by adventure he met with foure knights of king Arthurs court, sir Sagramore le Desirous, sir Osanna, sir Dodinas le Savage, and sir Felot of Listinoyse; and there sir Marhaus with one speare smote downe these foure knights, and hurt them sore. So hee departed, and met at his day afore set.

CHAP. LXXXIII.—*How sir Ewaine rode with the damosell of threescore yeeres of age, and how he gate the prise at a turney.*

NOW turne we unto Ewaine, which rode with his damosell of threscore winters of age, and she brought him there as was a turneyment nigh the march of Wales. And at that turneyment sir Ewaine smote downe thirtie knights, wherfore the price was given him, and the price was a jerfawcon² and a white steede trapped with cloth of gold. So there were in that countrey two knights that were brethren, and they were called two perillous knights, the one hight sir Edward of the reed castle³, and the other hight sir Hue of the reed castle. And these two brethren had disherited a lady that was called the lady of the roch of a baroney of lands, by their extortion. And as sir Ewaine lodged with this lady, she made her complaint unto him of these two knights. So on the morrow, the two knights were sent for that they should come thither to speake with the lady of the roch. And they cam with an hundred horses. But when the lady saw them in this maner so many, she would not suffer sir Ewaine to goe out unto them, but she made him to speake with them out of a towre. But finally these two brethren would not be entreated, and answered that they would keep that they had. 'Wel,' said sir Ewaine, 'then wil I fight with one of you both, and prove upon your bodies that yee doe wrong and extortion unto this lady.' 'That will we not doe,' said the two brethren. 'For and we doe battaile, we two will fight with one

¹ *Twentie two.*—*Twelve*, Caxton.

² *Jerfawcon.*—The gerfalcon was the finest kind of hawk, procured chiefly from the north, but also, I believe, from Wales, and much prized.

³ *Reed castle.*—The red castle was Powis castle, still called in the Welsh language 'castle-coch,' which has the same signification.

'knight at once; and therefore if ye will fight so, we will be ready at what houre ye will assigne us. And if that yee winne us in plaine battaile, then the lady shall have her lands againe.'

CHAP. LXXXIV.—*How sir Ewaine fought with two knights, and overcame them.*

SO then the knights departed, and made them ready. And on the morrow sir Ewaine arose early, and heard masse, and brake his fast, and after rode unto the plaine without the gates, where hove the two brethren bidding him. Then rode they together passing sore, that sir Edward and sir Hue brake their speares upon sir Ewaine. And sir Ewaine smote sir Edward that he fell over his horse taile, and yet brake not his speare. And then hee spurred his horse and came upon sir Hue, and overthrew him; but they soone recovered, and bad sir Ewaine alight. Then sir Ewaine avoyded sodainely his horse, and either gave other great strookes. And thus fought they together five houres, as men enraged and without reason. And at the last sir Ewaine smote sir Edward upon the helme such a buffet that his sword karved him unto his canel bone¹, and then sir Hue abated his courage. But sir Ewaine pressed fast to have slaine him. And when sir Hue saw that, he kneeled downe and yeelded him unto sir Ewaine. And he of his gentlenesse received his sword, and tooke him by the hand, and they went into the castle together. Then the lady was restored unto her lands, and sir Hue was commanded to be at the court of king Arthur at the next feast of Penticost.

CHAP. LXXXV.—*How, at the yeares end, all the three knights with their three damosels met at the fountaine.*

AND right at the twelve monethes end, they met all three knights at the fountaine, and their damosels. But the damosell that sir Gawaine had with him could say but little worship of him. So they departed from the damosels, and rode through a great forrest, and there they met with a messenger that came from king Arthur, which had sought them wel nigh a twelve moneth, and was charged if that he might finde sir Gawaine and sir Ewaine, to bring them unto the court againe. And they praied sir Marhaus to ride with them unto king Arthurs court. And so within twelve dayes they came to Camelot, and the king was passing glad of their comming, and so were al they of the court. Against the feast of Penticost, came the damosell of the lake, and brought with her sir Pelleas. And at that feast sir Pelleas and sir Marhaus were made knights of the table round, for there were two sieges voide, for two

¹ *Canel bone.*—The collar-bone.

knights had beene slaine in those twelve monethes. But oftentimes, at the justs and turneyments, sir Pelles quited sir Gawaine, for so it is rehearsed in the French booke. So sir Tristram¹ many dayes after that fought with sir Marhaus in an iland, and there they did a great battaile, but at the last sir Tristram slew him, and sir Tristram was sore wounded, that unneth hee might recover, and lay at a nunry halfe a yere. And sir Pelles was a worshipfull knight, and was one of the foure that atchieved the sancgreall.

CHAP. LXXXVI.—*How twelve aged men, embassadours of Rome, come to king Arthur for to demand truage for the realme of Brittain.*²

WHEN king Arthur had rested a while there came into his hall twelve ancient men, bearing each of them a branch of olive, in token they came as embassadours and messengers from the emperour Lucius³, of Rome; which said messengers, after their comming into the presence of king Arthur, did unto him their obeysance and said to him in this wise: 'The high and mighty emperour Lucius sendeth unto thee, king of Brittain, greeting, commanding thee to knowledge him for thy lord, and to send him the truage⁴ due of this realme unto the empire, which thy father and other tofore thy predecessors have payed. And if thou refuse his demand and commandement, know thou for a certaine that he shal make strong warre against thee. After this the king let call all his lords and knights of the round table to counsaile upon this matter, and desired them for to say their advise. Then sir Cador of Cornewaile spake first, and said, 'Sir, this message liketh mee well, for now I hope ye shal make sharpe war on the Romaines, where I doubt not but wee shal get honour.' 'I beleve well,' said king Arthur, 'that this matter pleaseth thee well, for truly I will never pay no truage to Rome, wherefore I pray you to counsaile me. I understand that Belinus and Brenius⁵, knights of Brittain, have had the empire in their hands many dayes; and also Constantine, the sonne of queene Helaine; which is an open evidence that we owe no tribute to Rome, but we that bee descended of them have right to claime the title of the empire.'

¹ *Sir Tristram*.—The adventures of this celebrated hero will be found in a later part of this work.

² Here the romance returns to the narrative of Geoffrey of Monmouth, who (lib. ix, c. 15) describes the Roman embassy, and, in the chapters following, the war which arose out of it. It may be remarked that our romance omits entirely the pretended conquest of Gaul by king Arthur, which is related in Geoffrey of Monmouth, and is assumed in the following chapters of our romance.

³ *Lucius*.—Geoffrey of Monmouth calls him Lucius Tiberius. Of course he is an imaginary emperour.

⁴ *Tuage*.—Fealty.

⁵ *Belinus and Brenius*.—The allusion to these worthies is taken directly from Geoffrey of Monmouth.

CHAP. LXXXVII.—*How the kings and lords promised unto king Arthur ayde and helpe against the Romaines.*

THEN answered king Anguish of Scotland, 'Sir, ye ought of right to be above all other kings, and I counsaile you never to obey the Romaines; wherefore to strength your quarrell, I shall furnish twentie thousand good men of warre, and wage them on my costs, which shal awaite on you with my selfe when it shall please you.' And the king of little Brittain granted him to the same thirtie thousand. And then every man agreed to make warre, and to ayde after their power. And when king Arthur understood their courage and good will, he thanked them heartily, and after he let cal the embassadours that they should heare their answer. And in presence of all his noble lords and knights he said to them in this wise: 'I will that yee returne unto your lord and procurour for the common weale for the Romaines, and say to him, of his demand and commandement I set nothing, and that I know of no truage ne tribute that I owe to him ne to none earthly creature nor prince christian nor heathen, but I pretend¹ to have and occupie the soveraintie of the empire, wherein I am entituled by the right of my predecessours, sometime kings of this land. And I am fully concluded to goe with mine army to Rome, to take possession in the empire, and subdue them that bee rebels; wherefore I command him that he make to me his homage, and to knowledge me for his emperour and governour upon paine that shal ensue.' And then he commanded his treasurer to give them great gifts, and to pay all their expences, and assigned sir Cadour to convey them out of the land. When the emperour Lucius had well heard and understood their credence, hee said: 'I had supposed that Arthur would have obeyed my commandement, and have served me himselfe as him well beseeemed or any other king so to doe.' 'O, sir,' said one of the senatours, 'I feare me that yee have made a rod for your selfe, for hee intendeth to bee lord of this empire, for he is an other maner of man than yee wist, and holdeth the most noble court of the world. On newyeares day we saw him in his great estate, which was the royallest that ever wee saw in our dayes, for he was served at the table with nine kings, and the noblest fellowship of other princes, lords, and knights that bee in all the world, and in his person the most manly man that liveth. Wherefore I advise you to keepe well your marches and wayes in the mountaines, for certainly he is a lord to be redoubted.' 'Well,' said Lucius, 'before Easter I suppose to passe the mountaines, and so into France, and there beave him of his lands with Genewayes² and other mighty warriours of Tuskaine and Lumberdy. And I shall send for all them that bee subject and alied to the

¹ *Pretend*.—Claim.

² *Genewayes*.—Genoese.

empire of Rome to come unto mine ayde.' And forthwith sent old wise knights to these countries following : first to Ambage and Arrage, to Alexandria, to Inde, to Hermony, where as the river of Euphrates runneth into Asie, to Affrike, and Europe, to Ertaine, and to Elamy, to Araby, to Egypt, and to Damaske, to Damiet, and to Cayer, to Capadoce, and to Tarce, to Turkey, Pounce, and Pampoille, to Surry and Galacy. All these were subject to Rome, and many moe, as Greece, Cypres, and Macydone, Calabre, Cateland, Portingale, with many a thousand of Spaniards. Then all these kings, dukes, and admiralls assembled about Rome, with sixteene kings at once, with a wondrous great multitude of people. When the emperour understood their comming, hee made ready his Romanes and al the people between him and Flanders ; and also he had gotten with him fiftie gyants, the sons of fiends, and they were ordained to keepe and garde his person, and to break the front of the battail of king Arthur. And thus he departed from Rome, and came downe the mountaines of Savoy for to destroy the lands that king Arthur had conquered, and came to Colaine¹ and besieged a castle thereby, and won it soone, and stuffed it well with two hundred Sarasins and infidels ; and after destroyed many faire countries, which king Arthur had won of king Claudas. And thus Lucius came with all his hoast, which were disperpled² three score miles in bredth, and commanded them to meete with him in Burgoine, for hee supposed to destroy the realme of little Brittain.

CHAP. LXXXVIII.—*How king Arthur held a parliament at Yorke, and how hee ordeined in what manner the realme should be governed in his absence.*

NOW leave wee off Lucius the emperour, and speake we of king Arthur, which commanded all them of his retinue to be ready at the utas³ of Saint Hilary for to hold a parliament at Yorke. And at that parliament was concluded that all the navie of the land should bee arested⁴, and to bee ready within fiftene dayes at Sandwich. And there he ordeined two governours of the realme, that is to say, sir Bawdewaine of Brittain for to counsaile to the best, and sir Constantine, sonne to sir Cadour of Cornewaile, which after the death of king Arthur was king of this realme⁵. And in the presence of all his lords hee resigned the rule of the realme and Guenever his queene unto them. Thus the king with his great army departed. And when he

¹ Colaine.—Cologne.

² Ulas.—The octaves.

³ Arrested.—Alluding to the custom of the Middle Ages, when, in time of war, the shipping of the various seaports were seized temporarily for shipping the king's troops, or for other purposes of war.

⁴ King of this realme.—According to Geoffrey of Monmouth, this Constantine was, as here stated, Arthur's immediate successor.

⁵ Disperpled.—Spread out ; distributed.

was on his horse he said, with an hie voice, 'If I die in that journey, I will that sir Constantine be mine heire and king crowned of this realme as next of my blood.' And after departed and entred into the sea at Sandwich with all his army, with a great multitude of ships, gallies, cogges, and dromons¹, sailing on the sea.

CHAP. LXXXIX.—*How king Arthur, being shipped and lying in his cabin, had a marvailous dreame, and of the exposition thereof.*

AND as the king lay in his cabin in the ship, he fell into a sleepe, and dreamed a mervailous dreame; him seemed that a dreadful dragon devoured much of his people, and he came flying out of the west, and a hidious flame of fire flew out of his mouth. After, him seemed that there came out of the orient a grimly bore all black in a cloud. Then the dreadful dragon advanced him and came in the winde like a faulcon, giving great strookes to the bore, and the bore hit him again with his grisly tuskes that the hot blood made al the sea red of his blood. Then the dragon flew away all on an height, and came downe with such a might and smoot the boore on the ridge², which was ten foote large from the head to the taile, and smote the boore all to powder, both flesh and bones, that it flittered all abroad on the sea. And therewith the king awoke, and was sore abashed of this dreame, and sent anon for a wise phylosopher, commanding him to tell him the signification of his dreame. 'Sir,' said the phylosopher, 'the dragon that ye dreamed of betokeneth your owne person which saileth here; and the bore that the dragon slew comming from the clouds betokeneth some tyrant that tormenteth the people, or else ye are like to fight with some gyant your selfe; wherefore of this dreadfull dreame doubt nothing, but as a conquerer comfort your selfe.' Then soone after this they sayled till they arrived at Bireflet³ in Flaunders; and when they were there, he found many of his great lords ready as they had beene commanded to waite upon him.

CHAP. XC.—*How a man of the country told him of a mervailous gyant⁴, and how he fought and conquered him.*

THEN came to him an husbandman of the country, and told him how there was in the country of Constantine, beside Brittain, a great gyant, which had slaine, murdered, and de-

¹ *Cogges and dromons*.—The cog was a small vessel; the dromon, or dromond, was, on the contrary, a large ship of war.

² *Ridge*.—Back.

³ *Bireflet*.—*Barflete*, Caxton.

⁴ *A mervailous gyant*.—The fate of Helen of Britany, and Arthur's combat with the giant, are taken from Geoffrey of Monmouth, lib. x, c. 3. This legend appears to have been connected with Mount St. Michel in Normandy from an early period; and the supposed site of the adventure, formerly known by the name of Tombeleyne, was afterwards occupied by the church and monastery.

voured much people of the cuntry; and had taken the duchesse of Brittain as she rode with her men; and it was thought that he had slaine her. 'Now, fellow,' said king Arthur, 'canst thou bring me there where as this gyant haunteth?' 'Yea, sir,' said the good man, 'loe yonder wher as ye see the two great fires, there shall ye not faile to find him, and more treasure then is in all the realme of Fraunce.' When king Arthur had understood this pitious case, he returned into his tent, and called unto him sir Kay and sir Bedivere, and commanded them secretly to make ready horse and harneis for himselfe and for them twaine, for after evensong hee would ride on pilgrimage with them two onely, unto Saint Mighels mount¹. And so they three departed thence, and rode forth as fast as they might till they came unto the furlong² of that mount, and there they alighted, and the king commanded them to tarry there, and said hee would himselfe goe up to that mount.

And so he ascended up the mount till hee came to a great fire, and there found hee a carefull³ widow sitting by a grave new made. And then king Arthur saluted her, and demanded her wherefore she made such lamentation. Unto whom shee answered and said: 'Sir knight, speake soft, I hold thee unhappy; for if yee were such fittie as yee be, yee were not able to make resistance against this divel. Here lyeth a duchesse dead, which was the fairest lady of the world, wife unto sir Howell of Brittain.' 'Wel,' said king Arthur, 'I wil accomplish my message for all your fearefull words;' and went forth by the creast of that hill, and saw wher sate the gyant at supper, gnawing on a limbe of a man, beking⁴ his broad limbes by the fire, and three damosels turning three broches whercon was broached twelve young children. When king Arthur beheld that pitious sight, he had great compassion on them, saying in this wise: 'Hee that al the world weldeth, give thee short life and shameful death, and the divell have thy soule! Why hast thou murdered these young innocent children, and this duchesse? therefore arise, thou glutton; for this day thou shalt die of my hands.' Then anon the gyant start up, and took a great club in his hand, and smote at the king that his coronall fell to the earth. And king Arthur hit him againe that hee fell downe to the ground. Then the gyant with great anguish threw away his club of iron, and caught the king in his armes that hee crushed his ribs. Then the three damosels kneeled downe and called unto our Lord Jesus Christ for helpe

¹ *Saint Mighels mount*.—It is hardly necessary to state that Mount St. Michel of Normandy was, at a later period, a very celebrated object of pilgrimage; but our romance-writer is guilty of a great anachronism in making king Arthur go thither for that purpose.

² *Furlong*.—*Forbond of that mount*, Caxton. *Forbond* means, probably, the extreme boundary.

³ *Carefull*.—Full of care; sorrowful.

⁴ *Beking*.—Warming himself; basking.

and comfort of the noble king Arthur. And then king Arthur weltred¹ and wrong that he was one while under and other while above. And so weltering and wallowing they roled downe the hill, till they came to the sea marke, and as they so tumbled and weltred, king Arthur smot him with his dagger; and it fortuneth they came unto the place where as the two knights were that kept king Arthurs horse. Then when they saw the king fast in the gyants armes, they came and loosed him; and then king Arthur commanded sir Kay 'to smite off the giants head, and beare it to sir Howell, and tel him that his enemy is slaine; and goe ye two to the mountaine and fetch me my shield and my sword, and also the great club of iron, and as for the treasure take it to you, so that I have his kirtell and the club, I desire no more.' And after that, king Arthur commanded his cosin Howell that he should ordeine for a church to bee builded upon the same hill, in the worship of Saint Mighell. And on the morrow, the noble king Arthur came into the countrey of Champaigne: and the king being set at his dinner, there came in two messengers, of whom the one was marshal of France, and said to the king that the emperour was entred into France, and had destroyed a great part thereof, and was in Burgoine.

CHAP. XCI.—*How king Arthur sent sir Gawaine and others to Lucius the emperour, and how they were assailed, and escaped with worship.*

THEN king Arthur did cal sir Gawaine, sir Bors, sir Lionel, and sir Bedivere, and commanded them to goe straight to Lucius the emperour, and bid him remove out of the land, or make him ready to battaile. Then anon these noble knights, when they came to the greene wood, saw pight in a meddow many pavilions of silke beside a river, and the emperours pavilion was in the middle with an eagle displayed above, toward which pavilion our knights rode, and ordained sir Gawaine and sir Bors to doe the message, and left in ambushment sir Lionell and sir Bedivere. And then sir Gawaine and sir Bors commanded Lucius in king Arthurs name to avoide his land, or else shortly to dresse him to battaile. To whom Lucius answered and said, 'Ye shall returne to your lord and say to him that I shal subdue him and all his lands.' Then a knight named sir Gainus, nigh cosin to the emperour, said 'Loe how these Britons bee full of pride and boast, and they brag as though they bare up all the world.' Then was sir Gawaine sore agrieved with these words, and drew out his sword and smote off sir Gainus head, and anon therewith turned their horses and rode till they came to their ambushment, wheras sir Lionell and sir Bedivere were hoving. The Romans followed fast

¹ *Weltred*.—Rolled about.

after, and sir Feldenak thought to revenge the death of Gainus upon sir Gawaine, but sir Gawaine was anon ware thereof, and smote him on the head, which strooke stunted not untill it came to his brest; and sir Bors slewe Calibure, one of the strongest of Pavy. Then the Romaines gathered more people, and sir Bors and sir Berel were taken. But when sir Gawaine saw that, hee tooke with him sir Idrus the good knight, and said he would never se king Arthur but if he rescued them, and drew out Galatine¹ his good sword, and he smote him that led sir Bors, and sir Idrus in like wise rescued sir Berell. Then began the battaile to be passing great, and our knights were in great jeopardy, wherefore sir Gawaine sent for succour unto king Arthur; but or the king departed, sir Gawaine and his fellowes gate the field and put the Romaines to flight, and after returned in such wise that no man of worship was lost of them, save that sir Gawaine was sore hurt. And thus was the beginning of the first journey of the Britons and the Romaines. And on the morrow after, king Arthur sent all the prisoners into Paris, under the gard of sir Lancelot and sir Cador, with many other knights.

CHAP. XCII.—*How Lucius sent certaine spies into ambush for to have taken his knights, being prisoners, and how they were letted.*

NOW turne wee to the emperour of Rome, which espied that these prisoners should be sent to Paris. And so on the morrow as sir Lancelot and sir Cador would passe through a wood, sir Lancelot sent certaine knights to espie if any were in the wood to let them. And the knights returned and told sir Lancelot that there lay in waite threescore thousand Romaines. And then sir Lancelot with such knights as hee had and men of warre to the number of ten thousand went and met with them, and slew and detrenched² many of the Romans, and slew many knights and admiralls³. Of the Romaines and Sarasins partie there was slaine the king of Lyly and three great lords, Aladuke, Herawd, and Heringdale. But sir Lancelot⁴ fought so nobly that no man might endure a strooke of his hand. And so long they fought that tydings came unto king Arthur, and anon hee came to the battail, and saw how his

¹ *Galatine*.—The sword of Gawaine was celebrated in mediæval romance. A curious extract from a MS. printed in the notes to Fr. Michel's *Tristan*, vol. ii. p. 181, says it was made by the mythic smith Weland.

² *Detrenched*.—Cut up; cut to pieces.

³ *Admiralls*.—This word is not here taken in its modern sense, but means an emir or Saracen chief.

⁴ *Sir Lancelot*.—Lancelot was one of the most celebrated of the heroes of this cycle of romances, and was the subject of several separate poems and romances. He is represented as the son of king Ban of Britany; and on the death of his father was carried away, then an infant, by the lady of the lake, who fostered him. Hence he was called Lancelot du Lac. Many of sir Lancelot's adventures are related in the sequel of the present romance.

knights had vanquished the battaile; hee embraced them knight by knight in his armes, and said, 'Yee be worthy to weld all your honour and worship; there was never no king that had so noble knights as I have.' 'Sir,' said sir Cadour, 'there was none of us that failed other, but of the prowesse and manhood of sir Lancelot were more then wonder to tell, and also of his cosins which did this day many noble feates of warre.' And also sir Cadour told who of his knights were slaine; and the king wept and dried his eyes with a handkercher; and said, 'Your courage had neere hand destroyed you, for though yee had returned againe, yee had lost no worship.'

CHAP. XCIII.—*How a senatour told to the emperour Lucius of their discomfiture, and also of the great battaile betwene king Arthur and Lucius.*

NOW leave wee off the noble king Arthur and his noble knights, and speake we of a senatour that escaped from the battaile, and came to the emperour Lucius, and said to him, 'Sir emperour, I advise thee to withdraw thee; for this day one of king Arthurs knights was worth in the battaile an hundred of ours.' 'Fie on thee,' said Lucius, 'thy words grieve me more then all the losse that I have had this day.' Then anon he sent forth a king that hight sir Liomy, with a great army, and bad him hyc him fast afore, and he would hastily follow after. Then was king Arthur privily warned, and sent his people to Soissons¹, and tooke up the townes and castles from the Romaines. When the emperour was entred into the vale of Soissons, he might see where king Arthur was embatailed and his banners dislaid, and saw that needs he must fight or yeeld him, for he might not flee. Then said Lucius to the Romaines, 'Sirs, I admonish you that this day yee remember how Rome dominereth and is chiefe and head over all the universall world, and suffer not these Britons this day to abide against us.' Then the battaile approached; and great valiances, prowesses, and feates of warre were that day shewed; but in especiall of them king Arthur rode into the battaile, and did as nobly with his hands as it were possible a man to doe; and there he slew a great gyant named Galapas, which was a man of mervailous quantitie and hight; and the body slew six Sarasins in the falling downe. There sir Gawaine fought nobly, and slew three admiralls in that battaile. And all the knights of the round table did full nobly. At the last king Arthur espied where Lucius fought and did wonder with his owne hands, and anon he rode to him, and either smote other fiersly; and anon king Arthur strooke Lucius through the helme with Excalibur, so that the emperour fell downe dead. Then when it was knowne that the emperour was slaine, anon all the

¹ Soissons.—Sessoynne, Caxton.

Romaines put them to flight. Then the king rode straight to the place where the emperour Lucius lay dead, and with him hee found slaine the sowdan of Surrey, the king of Egypt, and the king of Ethiope, which were two noble kings, with seventene other kings of divers other regions, and also threescore senatours of Rome, all noble men, whom the noble king Arthur did embaulme and gumme with many good aromatike gummes, and after hee did ceere them in threescore fold of ceered cloth of sendale¹, and then laid them in chests of lead, because they should not chase² nor savour³; and upon all these bodyes were set their shields with their armes and banners, to the end they should bee known of what countrey they were. And after hee found three senatours that were alive, unto whom hee said, 'For to save your lives, I will that yee take these dead bodies, and carry them with you unto great Rome. and present them to the potestate⁴ on my behalfe, shewing him my letters: and I command you that ye say, unto the potestate and all the counsaile and senate, that I send unto them these dead bodies for the tribute that they have demanded. And if they be not content with these, I shall pay more at my comming, for other tribute owe I none, nor none other will I pay.' Then the three senatours aforesaid departed with all the said dead bodies, the body of Lucius lying in a cart covered with the armes of the empire all alone; and so went toward Rome, and shewed their legation and message to the potestate and senate, recounting the battaile done in France, and how the field was lost: wherefore they advised them in no wise to move more warre against that noble conquerour king Arthur. •

CHAP. XCIV.—*How king Arthur, after that he had atchieved the battaile against the Romaines, entred into Almaine, and so into Italy.*

NOW turne we unto king Arthur, which, after the great battaile atchieved against the Romaines, entred into Loraine, Braband, and Flaunders, and sithen returned into hie Almaine, and so over the mountaines into Lumbardy, and after into Tuskaine, wherein was a citie which in no manner of wise would yeeld themselves nor obey, wherefore the noble king Arthur besieged it, and lay full long about it, and gave many assaults to the citie. And they within defended them valiantly. Then on a time the king called sir Florence, a knight, and told him that they lacked vitale, 'and not farre from hence be great forrests, wherein be many of mine enemies with much bestiall.

¹ *Sendale*.—A sort of thin silk.

² *Chase*.—*Chauſſe ne ſavoure*, Caxton. *Chafe*, used perhaps in the sense of to decompose, is probably the correct reading.

³ *Savour*.—Smell.

⁴ *Potestate*.—This word is no doubt intended to represent the Italian *podesta*, or chief municipal officer.

I will that thou make thee ready and goe thither in forcing¹, and take with thee sir Gawaine my nephew, and sir Whichard, and sir Clegis, sir Clemond², and also the captaine of Cardife, with many other moe, and bring with you all the beastes that yee may get there.' And anon these knights made them ready, and rod over holts and hills, through forrests and woods, till they came to a faire meddowe full of faire floures and grasse, and there they rested them and their horses all that night; and in the springing of the day on the next morrow sir Gawaine tooke his horse and stale away from his fellowes to seeke some adventure. And anon he was warc of a knight sitting on a strong courser, without any man save onely a page bearing a mighty spear, and the knight bare in his shield three griffons of gold in sable carbuncle, the chiefe of silver. When sir Gawaine espied this gay knight he fewtred³ his speare, and rode straight unto him, and demanded him of whence he was. That other answered and said he was a Tuskaine, and demanded of sir Gawaine, 'Thou proud knight, what profferest thou me so boldly? heere getest thou no prey; thou mayest prove when thou wilt, for thou shalt be my prisoner or thou depart.' Then said sir Gawaine, 'Thou vauntest thee greatly, and speakest all too proud words; I counsaile thee, for al thy boast, that thou make thee ready and take thy geere to thee, tofore greater game fall to thee.'

CHAP. XCV.—*Of the battaile done by sir Gawaine against a Sarasin, which after was taken and became Christian.*

THEY tooke their speares, and ranne each at other with al the might they had, and smote each other through their shields into their shoulders, wherefore anon they drew out their swords and smote great strookes so that the fire sprang out of their helmes. Then was sir Gawaine all abashed, and with Galantine his good sword he smote him through the shield, rushed⁴ and brake the precious stones, and made him a large wound. Then that knight groned, and dressed him to sir Gawaine, and with an awke⁵ strook gave him a great wound, and he bled fast. Then said the knight to sir Gawaine: 'Bind thy wound or thy blood change, for thou beebleddest⁶ all thy horse and thy faire armes, for all the leeches⁷ of Brittain shall not stench thy blood, for whosoever is hurt with this blade hee shall never bee stenchd of bleeding.' Then answered sir

¹ *In forcing.*—*In foreyeng*, Caxton; i. e. foraying, or foraging.

² *Clemond.*—*Claremond*, Caxton.

³ *Fewtred.*—*To fewler* was the term for putting the spear in the rest.

⁴ *To-rushed.*—*Bruised*.

⁵ *Awke strook.*—A cross or oblique stroke.

⁶ *Beebleddest.*—Coverest with blood.

⁷ *Leeches.*—*Barbours*, Caxton.

Gawaine : ' It grieveth mee but little, thy great words shall not feare me ne lesse my courage, but thou shalt suffer teene¹ and sorrow or we depart ; but tell me in haste who may stench my bleeding.' ' That may I doe,' said the knight, ' if I will ; and so I will if thou wilt succour and aide me that I may be christned and beleve on God, and therefore I require thee of thy manhood, and it shall be great merit for thy soule.' ' I am content,' said sir Gawaine, ' so God helpe me to accomplish all thy desire. But first tell mee what thou soughtest thus here alone, and of what land and legiance thou art.' ' Sir,' said the knight, ' my name is Priamus, and a great prince is my father, and he hath beene rebel unto Rome, and hath overridden many of their land ; my father is lineally descended of Alexander and of Hector by right line ; and duke Josue and Machabæus were of our linage. I am right inheritor of Alexandry and Affrike and of all the out isles, yet will I beleve on the Lord that thou beleevest on, and for thy labour I shall give thee treasure enough. I was so elevated and taken² in my heart that I thought no man my peere ne to me semblable. I was sent to this warre with sevenscore knights, and now I have encountred with thee which hath given me of fighting my fill, wherefore, sir knight, I pray thee to tell me what thou art, and of thy being.' ' By God,' said sir Gawaine, ' now wil I tel the truth : my name is sir Gawaine, and knowen I am in king Arthur's noble court and in his chamber, and one of the knights of the round table ; he dubbed me a duke with his owne hands, therefore grudge not if his grace is to me fortune and common, it is the goodnesse of God that lent to me my strength.' ' Now am I better pleased,' said Priamus, ' then if thou hadst given mee all the province of Paris the rich ; but now, sir knight, I warne thee that hereby is a duke of Loraine with all his army, and hath the noblest men of armes of all Dolphine³, and lords of Lumberdy, with the garnison of Godard, and Sarasins of Southland, to the number of threescore thousand of good men of warre.' Then sir Gawaine rode over a water for to save himselfe, and the knight followed after him, and so they rode forth till they came to his fellows that were in the meddow, where as they had beene all the night. Then sir Priamus and sir Gawaine alighted, and Priamus tooke from his page a viole full of the fourre waters that came out of Paradise⁴, and with certaine balme nointed their woundes, and washed them with that water, and within an houre after they were both as whole as ever they were.

¹ *Teene*.—Grief.

² *Elate and hawteyn in my hert*, Caxton.

³ *Dolphine*.—Dauphiné.

⁴ *Paradise*.—The four rivers of Paradise are named in the following lines of the old Scottish poet, sir David Lindsay

' Four fludis flowing from one fountane fair,
As Tigris, Ganges, Euphrates, and Nile,
Quhilk in the eist transcurris mony ane myle.'

And then they were all assembled unto counsaile, and Priamus told them that without faile they should be assailed with many a thousand, wherefore he counseled them to withdraw them. Then said sir Gawaine, 'it were great shame to them to avoide without any strookes, and with the helpe of God wee shall overthrow them: and sir Florens shall abide still in this field to keepe the stall¹ as a noble knight, and wee shall not forsake yonder fellowes.' 'Now,' said Priamus, 'I warne you ye shall find in yonder woods many perilous knights; they be out of number, and ye are not past seven hundred, which be over few to fight with so many.' 'Neverthesse,' said sir Gawaine, 'we shall once encounter with them, and see what they can doe, and the best shall have the victorie.'

CHAP. XCVI.—*How that the Sarasins came out of a wood for to rescew their beasts, and of a great battaile.*

THEN sir Florence called to him sir Floridas, with an hundred knights, and drove forth the heard of beasts. Then followed him seven hundred men of armes, and sir Ferraunt of Spaine on a faire steede came leaping out of the wood, and smote in among them, and there was great fight and many slaine and laid downe upon the cold ground, and sir Florens with his hundred knights alwayes kept the stale, and fought right manfully. Then an earle called sir Ethelwold and the duke of Duchmen came leaping out of a wood with many a thousand, and Priamus knights, and came straight unto the battaile. And then thrust in among them the knights of the table round, and smote downe to the earth all them that withstood them, in so much that they made them to give back and flec. Then entred into the battell a gyant named Juliance², and fought and slew down right, and distressed many of our knights, among whom was slaine sir Gherard, a knight of Wales. And then came in sir Priamus with his penon, and rode with the knights of the round table, and fought so manfully that many of their enemies lost their lives; and there sir Priamus slew the marques of Moises land. And sir Gawaine with his fellows quit them so well that they had the field; but in that combat was sir Chastilaine³, a child and ward of sir Gawaine, slaine. Then Sir Florens and sir Gawaine harbowred surely their people, and tooke great plenty of beasts, of gold and silver, and of great treasure and riches, and returned unto king Arthur which lay still at the siege.

¹ *Stall*.—*Stale*, Caxton; used here in the sense of an ambush, or post.

² *Juliance*.—*Jubaunce*, Caxton.

³ *Sir Chastelayne*, Caxton.—The words which follow are corrected from Caxton; the text of 1634 has, *a child, and was slaine of sir Gawaine*.

CHAP. XCVII.—*How sir Gawaine returned to king Arthur with his prisoners, and how the king won a citie, and how he was crowned emperour.*

‘NOW thanked be God,’ said king Arthur; ‘but what manner man is he that standeth by himselfe? he seemeth no prisoner.’ ‘Sir,’ said sir Gawaine, ‘this is a good man of armes; he hath matched me, but he is beholden unto God and to me for to become a Christian; had not hee beene, we should never have returned; wherefore I pray you that he may be baptized, for there liveth not a nobler man nor a better knight of his hands.’ Then anone the king let him bee baptized, and did call him by his first name Priamus, and made him a duke and knight of the round table.

And then anon the king did make assault to the citie. Then came out a duchesse and Clarisine the countesse, with many ladies and damosels, kneeling before the king and requiring him for the love of God to receive the citie, and not to take it by assault, for then should many giltlesse be slaine. Then the king availed¹ his visier with a meeke and noble countenance, and said: ‘Madam, there shall none of my subjects misdoe you nor none of your damosels, nor to none that to you belongeth, but the duke shall abide my judgement.’ Then anon the king commanded to leave the assault. And anon the dukes eldest sonne brought out the keyes, and kneeling downe delivered them to the king, and besought him of grace, and the king seased² the towne by assent of his lords, and tooke the duke and sent him to Dover, there to abide prisoner. And after that he tooke his journey toward Rome, and sent sir Floris and sir Floridas tofore with five hundred men of armes; and they came to the citie of Urbine, and so wan the bridge, and after they wan the towne, and set upon the walls the kings banner. And when they of Milane heard that the foresaid citie was won, they sent unto king Arthur great summes of money, promising to be his true subjects for evermore, and yeeld to him homage and fealtie for the lands of Pleasance³, and of Pavie, Petersaint, and the poore of Tremble, and to give unto him yearely a million of gold during all his life time. Then king Arthur rode into Tuskane, and went to Spolute and to Viterbe; and from thence he rode into the vale of Vicecount, among the vines. And from thence he sent unto the senators of Rome, for to wit whether they would know him for their lord and chiefe governour or not. But soone after, upon a Saturday, came unto king Arthur all the senators that were left on live, and all the noblest

¹ *To avail.*—Literally, to lower. It was the term for moving down the visor of the helmet so as to uncover the face.

² *Seased.*—Took into his own possession.

³ Most of these names will be recognized at once. *Pleasant* is, of course, Placenza; and *Petersaint*, probably Pietra-Santa in Tuscany.

cardinalls which at that time dwelled within the citie of Rome, and they all besought him as governour to give them lycence for seven weekes to assemble together all the barony of the Romaines, and then to crowne him as emperour with holy creme¹, as it belongeth unto such an high and noble estate. And then the senatours made al things ready for his crownation. And then at the day appointed he was crowned emperour by the popes owne hands with all the solemnitie that could be made, and sojourned there a certaine time, and established all his lands from Rome unto France. And he gave unto sir Priamus the dutchye of Loraine. And he thanked him, and said that he would serve him and bee his true subject all the dayes of his life. Then said king Arthur unto his lords and knights, 'Now our conquest is achieved with great honour and worship; and therefore in all haste make you ready and returne we into England.' Then king Arthur commanded that no man upon paine of death should rob by the way, neither take vitaille nor none other thing, but that hee should truely pay therefore. And thus hee came over the sea, and landed at Sandwich, against whom came queene Guenever, and made great joy of his comming. And he was full nobly received of all his commons in every citie, towne, and burrough.

CHAP. XCVIII.—*How sir Launcelot and sir Lionell departed from the court for to seeke adventures, and how sir Lionell left sir Lancelot sleeping, and was taken.*

ANON after that king Arthur was come into England, all the knights of the round table resorted unto the king, and made many justs and tourneiments, and some ther were that were good knights, but especially sir Launcelot du Lake. For in al deeds of armes, both for life and death, he passed all knights, and at no time he was never overcome, but it were by treason or enchantment. Sir Lancelot encreased so mervailously in worshippe and honour, wherefore he is the first knight that the French booke maketh mention of, after that king Arthur came from Rome, wherefore queene Guenever had him in great favour above all other knights, and certainly he loved the queene againe above all other ladies and damosels, and for her he did many great deedes of armes, and saved her from the fire through his noble chivalrie. Then sir Launcelot bad his brother sir Lionell to make him ready, 'for we two will seeke adventures.' So they mounted upon their horses and rode into a deepe forrest; and after they came into a great plaine, and then the weather was hot about noone, and sir Launcelot had great list to sleepe. Then sir Lionell espied a great apple tree

¹ *Creme*.—The crism, or consecrated oil.

that stood by an hedge, and said : ' Brother, yonder is a faire shadow, there may we rest us and our horses.' And so they alighted there, and sir Launcelot laide him downe and laid his helme under his head ; and sir Lionell waked while he slept. And in the meane while there came three knights riding as fast flying as ever they might ride, and there followed after those three but one knight. So within a while this strong knight had overtaken these three knights that fled, and one after other he smote them all three to the grounde. And then hee alighted downe, and bound al the three knights fast with the reines of their owne bridles. And when sir Lionell saw him doe thus, hee thought to assay him, and made him ready ; and slyly and privily hee tooke his horse, and thought not to waken his brother sir Launcelot. And so when he was mounted upon his horse, and had overtaken this strong knight, he bade him turne. And so hee turned him, and smote sir Lionell so hard that horse and man hee bare to the earth, and then he alighted and bound him fast, and threw him overthwart his owne horse, and so he served them al foure, and rode with them away to his owne castle. And when hee came there, he unarmed them and beate them with thornes, and after put them in a deepe prison, where were many moe knight that made great moone¹.

CHAP. XCIX.—*How sir Ector de Maris followed to seeke sir Launcelot, and how he was taken by sir Torquine.*

WHEN sir Ector de Maris wist that sir Launcelot was past out of the court to seeke adventures, hee made him ready to seeke sir Launcelot ; and as hee had ridden long in a great forrest, hee met with a man that was like a foster². ' Faire fellow,' said sir Ector, ' knowest thou in this countrey any adventures which bee here nigh hand ? ' ' Sir,' said the foster, ' this countrey know I well, and here within this mile is a strong mannor and wel ditched, and ther groweth a faire tree, whereon hangeth many faire shields that belonged sometime unto good knights, and at the hole³ of the tree hangeth a bason of copper and latin⁴, and strike upon that bason with the end of the speare thrice, and soon after thou shalt heere new tidings,' ' Gramercy,' said sir Ector ; and so hee departed, and came to the tree, and saw many faire shields, and among them he saw his brothers shield sir Lionell, and many moe that he knew that were his fellowes of the round table, and there hee promised to revenge his brother sir Lionell. And anon sir

¹ *Moone*.—Moan ; lament.

² *Foster*.—The common name for a forester.

³ *Hole*.—I suppose, the hollow or fork of the tree.

⁴ *Latin*.—A mixed metal resembling brass.

Ector beate upon thee bason. Anon there came a knight behind him, and bad him make him ready. And sir Ector anon turned him shortly, and shaken his speare, and smote the other knight a great buffet, that his horse turned thrice about. 'This was well done,' said the strong knight, 'and full knightly thou hast stricken me.' And therewith hee rushed his horse upon sir Ector, and caught him under his right arme, and bare him cleane out of the saddell, and so rode with him away into his hal, and threw him downe in the middle of the flore. The name of this knight was sir Turquine. Then said he unto sir Ector: 'For thou hast done this day more unto me then any knight did these twelve yeares, now will I graunt thee thy life, so that thou wilt bee sworne to mee as my prisoner all the dayes of thy life.' 'Nay,' said sir Ector, 'that wil I never promise thee, but that I will doe mine advantage.' 'That me repenteth,' said sir Turquine; and then he tooke him and unarmed him, and beate him with sharpe thornes, and after put him downe into a deepe dungeon, where he knew many of his fellowes; but when sir Ector saw sir Lionell, then made he great sorrow. 'Alas, brother!' said sir Ector, 'where is my brother sir Launcelot?' 'Faire brother, I left him asleepe when I went from him under an apple tree, and what is become of him I can not tell you.' 'Alas,' said the knights, 'but' sir Launcelot helpe us, we may never bee delivered, for we know now no knight that is able to match our maister sir Turquin.'

CHAP. C. *How foure queenes found sir Launcelot sleeping, and how by enchantment he was taken and led into a strong castle.*

NOW leave we these knights prisoners, and speake wee of sir Launcelot du Lake, that lieth under the apple tree sleeping. Even about the noone there came by hym foure queenes of great estate, and there rode foure knights about them, and bare a canope of greene silke on foure speares, and the queenes rode on foure white mules. Thus as they rode they heard by them a great horse grimly ney, and then were they ware of a sleeping knight that lay all armed under an apple tree; anon as these queenes looked on his face, they knew that it was sir Launcelot. Then they began to strive for that knight, and each of them said shee would have him unto her love. 'Wee shall not strive,' said Morgan le Fay, 'I shall put an enchantment upon him that hee shall not awake sixe houres, and then I will leade him away unto my castle, and when he is surely within my hold, I shall take the enchantment from him.' So this enchantment was cast upon sir Launcelot; and then they laid him upon his shield, and bare him so on

¹ But.—Used here in the sense of unless.

horsebacke betweene two knights, and brought him unto the castle Chariot, and there they laid him in a cold chamber, and at night they sent unto him a faire damosell with his supper ready dight. By that the enchauntment was past. 'Sir,' said the damosell, 'yee must make good cheere, and if ye be such a knight as is said that yee bee, I shall tell you more to morrow by prime of the day.' And in the morning early came these foure queenes. 'Sir knight,' said one of the foure queenes, 'thou must understand that thou art our prisoner, and we heere know thee well, that thou art sir Launcelot du Lake, king Bans son. And because we understand your worthinesse, and as we know well that now thou shalt loose queene Guenever for ever, therefore it behoveth thee now to choose one of us foure. I am queene Morgan le Fay, queene of the land of Gore, and heere is also the queene of Northgales, and the queene of Eastland, and the queene of the out illes; now choose ye one of us; and if ye will not doe thus, heere shall ye abide in this prison till that yee die.' 'This is an hard case,' said sir Launcelot, 'that either I must die, or else choose one of you; yet had I rather to die in this prison with worship then to have one of you; and therefore be ye answered, for I will have none of you, for ye bee false enchauntresses.' So they departed, and left him there alone that made great sorrow.

CHAP. CI.—*How sir Launcelot was delivered by the meanes of a damosell.*

RIGHT so at noone came the damosel to him, and brought him his dinner, and asked him what cheere. 'Truely, faire damosel,' said sir Launcelot, 'in al my life-dayes never so ill.' 'Sir,' said she, 'that me repenteth; but I shall helpe you out of this distresse, so that ye hold me a promesse.' 'Faie damosel, that I will grant you, and sore I am afeard of these queenes witches, for they have destroyed many a good knight.' 'Sir,' said shee, 'that is sooth, and for the renowne and bounty they heare of you, they would have your love; but the Tuesday laste past my father king Bagdemagus lost the field through three knights of king Arthurs court, and if ye will be there upon Tuesday next coming and helpe my father, to morrow or prime, by the grace of God, I shall deliver you cleane.' 'I know your father well,' said sir Launcelot, 'for a noble king and a good knight, and by the faith of my body, yee shall have my body ready to doe your father and you service at that day.' And so she departed, and came on the morrow early and found him ready. And when he was all armed and arrayed, she brought him unto his owne horse. And so he rode into a great forrest all that day, and in no wise could he find any high way, and so the night fell on him, and then was he ware in a slade¹

¹ A *slade*.—A valley, or ravine.

of a pavilion of reed sandall¹. 'By my faith,' said sir Launcelot, 'in that pavilion will I lodge all this night.' And so there he alighted downe, and tied his horse to the pavilion, and there he unarmed him, and found there a rich bed and laid him therein, and anon he fell on sleepe.

CHAP. CII.—*How a knight found sir Launcelot lying in his pavilion, and how sir Launcelot fought with that knight.*

THEN within an houre came the knight to whom belonged the pavilion, and so he laid him downe beside sir Launcelot. And sir Launcelot started lightly out of the bed, and the other knight lept after him, and either of them gat their swords in their hands, and out of the pavilion dore went the knight of the pavilion, and sir Launcelot followed him, and there by a little slade sir Launcelot wounded him sore nigh unto the death, and then he yeelded him unto sir Launcelot. And sir Launcelot tooke him to his mercy, so that he would tell him why he came into the bed. 'Sir,' said the knight, 'the pavilion is mine owne, and now I am likely to die of this wound.' 'That me repenteth,' said sir Launcelot, 'of your hurt, but I was sore adred of treason, for I was lately beguiled; and therefore come on your way into your pavilion; and as I suppose I shall stench your blood.' And so they went both into the pavilion, and anon sir Launcelot stenchd his blood. Therewith came the knights lady, which was a passing faire lady. And when she espied that her lord sir Belleus was so sore wounded, she cried out on sir Launcelot, and made great moone out of measure. 'Sir,' said the lady, 'I require you tell me what knight yee are, and what is your name?' 'Faire lady,' said he, 'my name is Launcelot du Lake.' 'So me thought by your speache,' said the lady. 'But now and ye would promise mee of your curtesie for the harmes that ye have done to mee and to my lord sir Belleus, that when he commeth to king Arthurs court to cause him to be made a knight of the round table.' 'Faire lady,' said sir Launcelot, 'let him come unto the court the next high feast, and looke that yee come with him.'

CHAP. CIII.—*How sir Launcelot was received of king Bagdemagus daughter, and how he made his complaint unto her father.*

THEN sir Launcelot departed; and rode till he saw an abbey; and as soon as he came within the abbey yard, king Bagdemagus daughter heard a great horse goe on the pavement. Then she in al the haste sent for her father that was within twelve mile of that abbey, and afore even hee

¹ *Reed sandall.*—Red silk.

came with a faire fellowship of knights with him. Anon sir Launcelot made his complaint unto the king how hee was betraied, and how his brother sir Lionell was departed from him hee wist not whither, and how his daughter had delivered him out of prison. 'Then am I sure of your helpe,' said the king, 'now on Tuesday next comming?' 'Ye, sir,' said sir Launcelot, 'I shal not faile you, for so have I promised unto my lady, your daughter. But, sir, what knights beene they of my lord king Arthurs that were with the king of Northgales?' And the king said, 'It was sir Mador de la Port, and sir Mordred, and sir Gahalatine.' 'Sir,' said sir Launcelot, 'as I heare say, the turnement shall be within three mile of this abbey; yee shall send unto mee three knights of yours, and looke that these three knights have all white shields and I also, and wee foure will come out of a little wood in the midst of both parties, and so I shall not bee knowen what knight I am.' And so the king departed, and sent unto sir Launcelot three knights, with foure white shields. And on the Tuesday they lodged them in a little leved¹ wood besid wher the turnement should be. Then came into the field the king of Northgales with eight score helmes, and then the three knights of king Arthurs stood by themselves. Then came into the field king Bagdemagus with fourescore helmes. And then they came together with an huge dash, and there were slaine of knights at the first oncounter twelve of king Bagdemagus part, and sixe of the king of Northgales part, and king Bagdemagus part was far set backe.

CHAP. CIV.—*How sir Launcelot behaved him in a turnement, and how hee met with sir Turquine leading away sir Gaheris with him.*

WITH that came sir Launcelot du Lake, and he thrust in with his speare in the thickest of the presse. 'Yonder is a shrewd gest,' said sir Mador de la Port, 'therefore have heere once at him.' Then sir Mador de la Port rode against sir Launcelot, and then sir Mordred, and then sir Gahalatine: but sir Launcelot smote them so sore that every eache of the three was borne to the ground, horse and man. Anon therewith sir Launcelot gat a great speare in his hand, and or ever it brake hee bare downe to the ground sixtene knights. And then he gat another great speare, and smot downe twelve knights, and the most of them never throve after. And then the knights of the king of Northgales would just no more. And the game was given unto king Bagdemagus. Soe either partie departed unto his owne place, and sir Launcelot rode forth with king Bagdemagus unto his castle. And on the morrow he tooke his leave, and told king Bagdemagus that hee would goe seeke his brother sir Lionel, that went from him

¹ *Leved*.—In leaf; a shady wood.

when he slept. And so sir Launcelot departed, and by adventure came into the same forrest where as he was taken sleeping. And in the middest of an hie way hee met with a damosell riding upon a white palfrey. 'Faire damosell,' said sir Launcelot, 'know yee in this countrey any adventures?' 'Well,' said the damosell, 'thou seemest well to be a right good knight, and I shall bring thee where as the best knight is and the mightiest that ever thou found, so that thou wilt tell mee what thy name is, and of what countrey and knight thou art?' 'Damosell, my name is sir Launcelot du Lake.' 'Sir, thou beseekest well, for hereby dwelleth a knight, and his name is sir Turquine, and hee hath in his prison of king Arthurs court good knights threescore and foure, that he hath won with his owne hands. But, when ye have done this journey, ye shall promise me as ye are a true knight for to go with me and helpe me and other damosels that are distressed with a false knight.' 'All your intent and desire, damosell, I will fulfil, so that ye wil bring me to this knight.' Then he rode endlong¹ the gates of the mannor well nigh halfe an houre, and then was hee ware of a great knight that drove an horse afore him, and overthwart the horse lay an armed knight bound. And ever as they came neerer sir Launcelot was ware that it was sir Gaheris, sir Gawaines brother, a knight of the table round. By that time that either had seene other, they tooke their speares unto them. 'Now, faire knight,' said sir Launcelot, 'put that wounded knight from thy horse, and let him rest a while, and then let us two prove our strength together.' 'And thou bee of the round table,' said sir Turquine, 'I defie thee and all thy fellowship.'

CHAP. CV.—*How sir Launcelot and Turquine fought together.*

AND then they put their speares in their rests, and either smote other in the middest of their shields, that both their horses backs burst under them, whereof the knights were both astonied; and as soone as they might avoide their horses, they came together egerly, and either gave other many great strookes. And so within a while they had both grimly² wounds, and bled passing grievously. At the last they were both brethlesse, and stood leaning on their swords. 'Now,' said sir Turquine, 'hold thy hand, sir knight, and tell me what I shall aske thee withall. There is one knight of king Arthurs court that hight sir Lancelot du Lake that I hate above all other knights, for that he slew my brother sir Carados, at the dolorous towre, and therefore him I except of all knights; but if thou be not sir Lancelot, I will deliver all the prisoners

¹ *Endlong*.—Along by the side of.

² *Grimly*.—Ghastly; horrible.

that I have, and that is three score and four; and thou and I will be fellows together as long as I live.' Then said sir Launcelot 'Now sir knight, I will that thou wit that I am sir Launcelot du Lake: and now I defie thee to do thy best.' And then hurtled they together as two wild bulls, rashing and lashing with their shields and swords, that sometime they fell both on their noses. Thus they fought still two houres and more, and never would rest, and sir Turquine gave sir Launcelot many wounds that all the ground there as they fought was all besprinkled with blood.

CHAP. CVI.—*How sir Turquine was slaine, and how sir Launcelot bad sir Gaheris deliver all the prisoners.*

THEN at the last sir Turquine waxed very faint, and sir Launcelot then leapt upon him fiersly as a lyon, and anon he rased¹ off his helme, and then hee smote his neck asunder. And when sir Launcelot had done this, he went unto the damosell and said to her, 'Damosell, I am ready to goe with you where ye will have me, but I have no horse.' 'Faire sir,' said the damosell, 'take yee this wounded knights horse, and send ye him into this mannor, and command him to goe and deliver all the prisoners.' And so sir Launcelot went unto sir Gaheris, and prayed him not to be greeved for to lend him his horse. 'Nay, faire lord,' said sir Gaheris, 'I will that ye take my horse at your owne command; for ye have slaine this day the mightiest man and the best knight (except your selfe) that ever I saw. Faire sir, I pray you tel me your name?' 'Sir, my name is sir Launcelot du Lake, which ought to helpe you of right for king Arthurs sake, and in especiall for my lord sir Gawaines sake, your dear brother, and when ye come within yonder mannor, yee shall finde there many noble knights of the round table, for I have seene many of their shields that I know; wherefore I pray you greeete them all from me, and say that I bid them take there such stuffe as they find, and that my brethren sir Ector and sir Lionell goe unto the court and abide there till I come thither; for as at this time I must ride with this damosell for to save my promisse.' And so he departed from sir Gaheris; and sir Gaheris went into the mannor, and there hee found a yeoman porter keeping many keies. And forthwith sir Gaheris threw the porter against the ground, and tooke the keyes and opened the prison, and there he let out all the prisoners, and every each loosed other of their bands. And when they saw sir Gaheris they all thanked him, for they wend because he was wounded that he had slaine sir Turquine. 'Not so,' said Gaheris, 'it was sir Launcelot that slew him. And he greeteth you all well, and prayeth you to haste you to

¹ *Rased.*—Tore off.

the court, and as unto sir Lionell and sir Ector de Maris, he praieth you to abide him at the court.'

'That shall wee not doe,' said his brethren, 'wee wil find him and wee may live.' 'So shall I,' said Sir Key, 'find him or I come at the court, as I am true knight.' Then al the knights sought the house where as the armour was, and every knight found his owne horse, and all that belonged unto him. And when all this was done, there came a forrester with foure horses laden with venison. And so that venison was rosted, baked, and sodden, and so after supper some abode there all night, but sir Lionell, and sir Ector de Maris, and sir Kay rode after sir Launcelot for to finde him if they might.

CHAP. CVII.—*How sir Launcelot rode with the damosel and slew a knight that distressed all ladies, and a villain that kept the passage over a bridge.*

NOW turne we unto sir Launcelot, that rode with the damosell in a faire high way. 'Sir,' said the damosell, 'there by this way haunteth a knight that distresseth all ladies and gentlewomen.' 'What,' said sir Launcelot, 'hee doth great shame unto the order of knighthood and contrary to his oath, it is pittie that he liveth. But faire damosell, yee shall ride your selfe alone before, and I will keepe my selfe in covert.' So the damosel rode on by the way a soft ambling pace. And within a while came that knight out of the wood, and there hee put the damosell from her horse, and then she cried. With that came sir Launcelot as fast as he might, and hee strok that knight such a buffet on the helmet that he clave his head unto the throate. 'Now hast thou thy payment that thou long hast deserved.' 'That is truth,' said the damosell, 'for like as Turquine watched to destroy knights, so did this knight attend to destroy and distresse ladies and gentlewomen, and his name was sir Peers du Forest Savage.' 'Now, damosell,' said sir Launcelot, 'will ye any more service of me?' 'Nay, sir,' said she, 'at this time, but almighty God preserve you wheresoever yee goe, for the curtiest¹ knight thou art and meekest unto al ladies and gentlewomen that now liveth.' And so sir Launcelot and the damosell departed. And then rode hee into a deepe forrest two daies and more, and had straite lodging. So on the third day hee rode over a great long bridge, and there start upon him sodainly a passing foule churle, and he smote his horse on the nose that hee turned about, and asked him why hee rode over that bridge without his licence. 'Why should not I ride this way?' said sir Launcelot. 'Thou shalt not choose,' said the churle; and so lashed at him with a mighty great club ful of pinns of iron. Then sir Launcelot drew his sword, and clove his head. And at the end of the bridge was

¹ *Curtiest*.—So Caxton, *curleyest*, i. e. most courteous.

a faire village, and sir Launcelot went straight into the castle. And then he alighted and tied his horse to a ring in the wall, and there he saw a faire greene court, and thither he dressed him, for there hee thought was a faire place to fight in. So hee looked about, and saw much people in doores and windowes, that said, 'Faire knight, thou art unhappie!'

CHAP. CVIII.—*How sir Launcelot slew two gyants, and made a castle free.*

ANON therewith came upon him two great gyants, who smote at sir Launcelot with their clubs, but hee put the strooke away with his shield, and slewe them both. Then sir Launcelot went into the hall, and there came afore him threescore ladies and damosells, and al kneeled unto him, and thanked God and him for their deliverance. 'For, sir,' said they, 'the most part of us have been here this seven yeare their prisoners: and we all pray you to tel us your name that we may tell our friends who delivered us out of prison.' 'Faire damosells,' said hee, 'my name is Launcelot du Lake. Now may yee say unto your friends how and who hath delivered you, and greete them from mee; and what treasure there is in this castle I give it you for a reward for your grievance, and the lord that is the owner of this castle, I would that he received it as his right and apurtenance.' 'Faire sir,' said they, 'the name of this castle is Tintagill, and a duke ought it some time that had wedded faire Igraine, and after Utherpendragon wedded her.' And then hee departed and rode into many strange and wilde countries, and evill was hee lodged. And at the last by fortune it happened him against a night to come to a faire courtlage, and therein he found an old gentlewoman which lodged him with a good will. And his hoast brought him to a faire garret over a gate to his bed. So soone after there came one on horsebacke, and knocked at the gate in great haste; and when sir Launcelot heard this, he arose up and looked out at the window, and saw by the moone light three knights that came riding after that one man, and al three lashed upon him at once with their swords, and that one knight turned on them knightly againe and defended himselfe. And therewith sir Launcelot tooke his harneis, and went out at a window by a sheete downe to the foure knights, and then sir Launcelot said all on high: 'Turne you knights unto mee, and leave your fighting with that knight.' And then they all three left sir Kay, and turned unto sir Launcelot, and assailed him on every side. And then anon within sixe strookes sir Launcelot had striken them to the earth. And then they all three cried: 'Sir knight, we yeeld us unto you as man of might.' 'As to that,' said sir

¹ *Thou art unhappie.*—Thou art unfortunate to have come here.

Launcelot, 'I will not take your yeelding unto mee, but so that yee wil yeeld you unto sir Kay the seneshall; upon that covenant will I save your lives, and else not.' 'Fairc knight,' said they, 'then in saving of our lives we will doe as yee commaund us.' 'Then shall ye,' said sir Launcelot, 'upon Whitsunday next comming, goe unto the court of king Arthur, and there shal yee yeeld you unto queene Guenever, and put you al three in her grace and mercy, and say that sir Kay sent you thither for to bee her prisoners.' And there every knight swore upon their swords; and so sir Launcelot suffered them to depart. And then sir Launcelot knocked at the gate with the pummell of his sword, and with that came his hoast, and so in they entred sir Kay and he. 'Sir,' said his hoast, 'I wend ye had beene in your bed.' 'So I was,' said sir Launcelot, 'but I arose and lept out at my chamber window to help an old fellow of mine.' On the morrow sir Launcelot arose early, and left sir Kay sleeping; and sir Launcelot tooke sir Kays armour and his shield, and armed him. And so he went to the stable and took his horse, and tooke leave of his hoast, and so departed. Then soone after arose sir Kay, and missed sir Launcelot; and then he espied that he had his armour and his horse. 'Now, by my faith, I know wel that hee will grieve some of king Arthurs court; for on him knights will bee bold, and deeme that it is I; and because of his armour and shield, I am sure that I shal ride in peace.' And then soone after departed sir Kay, and thanked his hoast.

CHAP. CIX.—*How sir Launcelot disguised in sir Kays armour, and how hee smote downe a knight.*

NOW turne we unto sir Launcelot, that at the last came into a low cuntry full of faire rivers and medowes, and afore him hee saw a long bridge, and three pavilions stood thereon of silke and sendell of divers hew, and without the pavilions hung three white shields. When he was past, the three knights said that it was the proud Kay, 'he weeneth no knight so good as he, and the contrary is oftentimes proved.' 'By my faith,' said one of the knights, whose name was sir Gaunter, 'I will ride after him, and assay him for all his pride, and ye may behold how I speed.' So this knight galloped after sir Launcelot. Then when hee came nigh him, hee cried: 'Abide, thou proud knight sir Kay, for thou shalt not passe quit.' So sir Launcelot turned him, and they came together with al their might, and sir Gaunters speare brake, but sir Launcelot smote him downe horse and man. And when sir Gaunter was on the earth, his brethren said one to another: 'Yonder knight is not sir Kay, for hee is bigger then hee.' 'I dare lay my head,' said sir Gilmere, 'yonder knight hath slaine sir Kay, and hath taken his horse and harneis.' 'Whether it bee so or no,' said

sir Reynold the third brother, 'let us now goe mount upon our horses and rescew our brother sir Gaunter upon paine of death; wee all shall have enough adoe to match that knight, for mee seemeth by his person it is sir Launcelot, or sir Tristram, or sir Pelleas.' Anon they tooke their horses, and overtooke sir Launcelot; and sir Gilmere put forth his speare and ran to sir Launcelot, and sir Launcelot smote him downe that hee lay in a sound. Then sir Reynold ran at sir Launcelot: and so they hurtled together, and all to-shivered both their speares; and then they drew their swords and lashed together eagerly. Anon therewith arose sir Gaunter and came unto his brother sir Gilmere, and bad him arise 'and help we our brother sir Reynold, which full mervailously matcheth yonder good knight.' Therewith they lept on their horses and hurtled unto sir Launcelot. And when hee saw them come, hee smote a sore strooke unto sir Reynold, that he fell off his horse to the ground; and then he strooke the other two brethren downe to the earth. With that sir Reynold began to start up with his head al bloody, and came straight unto sir Launcelot. 'Now let bee,' said sir Launcelot; 'I was not far from thee when thou wert made knight, sir Reynold, and also I know thou art a good knight, and loth I were to sley thee. Yee shall yeeld you unto dame Guenever; and looke that yee bee with her on Whitsunday, and yeeld you unto her as prisoners, and say that sir Kay sent you unto her.' Then they swore it should be done. And so passed forth sir Launcelot, and the three brethren helped each other as well as they might.

CHAP. CX.—*How sir Launcelot justed against foure knights of the round table, and overthrew them.*

SIR Launcelot rode into a deepe forrest, and there by a slade¹ he saw foure knights hovering² under an oke, and they were of king Arthurs court; that one was Sagramour le Desirous, sir Ector de Maris, sir Gawaine, and sir Ewaine³. Anon as these foure knights had spied sir Launcelot, they wend by his arms it had bene sir Kay. 'Now, by my faith,' said sir Sagramour, 'I will prove sir Kayes might.' Thereof was sir Launcelot ware, and smote sir Sagramour so sore that horse and man fel to the earth. 'Loe, my fellowes,' said sir Ector, 'yonder you may see what a buffet he hath; that knight is much bigger⁴ then ever was sir Kay. Now shall ye see what I may doe to him.' So sir Ector gat his speare in his hand, and galloped toward sir Launcelot, and sir Launcelot smote him through the

¹ *Slade*.—A little valley, or dell. See before, p. 150.

² *Hoving*.—Halting, waiting, sauntering.

³ *Sir Ewaine*.—*Sir Uwayne*, Caxton.

⁴ *Bigger*.—Big was used in the sense of strong and lusty.

shield and shoulder, that horse and man went to the earth, and ever his speare held. And therewith sir Ewaine rode toward sir Launcelot, and sir Launcelot knew him well, and so he met him on the plaine, and gave him such a buffet that of a great while hee wist not where hee was. 'Now I well see,' said sir Gawaine, 'I must encounter with that knight.' And so they let their horses run as fast as they might, and either smote other in the midst of their shields, but sir Gawaines speare brake, and sir Launcelot charged so sore upon him, that his horse reversed up and downe¹, and much sorrow² had sir Gawaine to avoide his horse; and so sir Launcelot passed on a pace and smiled. Then the foure knights went each one to other, and comforted each other. 'What say yee by this jest?' said sir Gawaine, 'that one speare hath feld us foure.' 'Wee commaund him to the divell,' said they all, 'for he is a man of great might.' 'Yee may well say it,' said sir Gawaine, 'that he is a man of great might, for I dare lay my life it is sir Launcelot, I know it by his riding. Let him go,' said sir Gawaine, 'for as we come to the court then shall wee wit³.' And then had they much sorrow to get their horses againe.

CHAP. CXI.—*How sir Launcelot followed a brachet into a castle, where as he found a dead knight, and how afterward he was required of a damosell for to heale her brother.*

NOW let us speake of sir Launcelot, that rode a great while in a deepe forrest, where he saw a blacke brachet⁴, seeking in maner as it had beene in the fealtie⁵ of an hurt deere, and therewith hee rode after the brachet through a great marish⁶; and then was he ware of an old mannor, and thither ran the brachet, and so over the bridge. And when he came into the midst of a great hall, there saw he lye a dead knight, and that brachet licked his wounds. And so he departed, and went into the forrest againe, and there he met with a damosell that knew him well, and shee said with a loud voice: 'Yee bee well found, my lord, and now I require you of your knighthood to helpe my brother, for this day hee slew sir Gilbert, and there was my brother sore wounded; and there is a sorceresse, that dwelleth in a castle here beside, and this day shee told me that my brothers wounds should never be whole till that I could find a knight that would goe into the chappell perilous, and there he should find a sword and a bloody cloath that the wounded knight was lapped in, and a peece of the cloath and sword should helpe my brothers wounds.' 'This is a mer-

¹ *Up and downe.*—*Up-so-doune*, Caxton; i. e. topsy-turvy.

² *Sorrow.*—Grief, trouble.

³ *Wit.*—Know.

⁴ *Brachet.*—A scenting dog. See p. 103.

⁵ *Fealtie.*—*Feaute*, Caxton, i. e. track, or trace.

⁶ *Marish.*—Marsh, or bog.

vailous thing,' said sir Launcelot; 'but what is your brothers name?' 'Sir,' said shee, 'his name is sir Meliot de Logres.' 'That mee repenteth,' said sir Launcelot, 'for he is a fellow of the round table, and to his helpe I will doe my power.'

CHAP. CXII.—*How sir Launcelot came into the chappell perilous, and gat there of a dead corps a peece of the cloath and a sword.*

RIGHT so sir Launcelot departed, and when he came to the chappell perilous, he alighted downe and tied his horse to a little gate. And hee saw on the front of the chappell many faire rich shields turned upside downe, and many of the shields sir Launcelot had seene knights bare before; with that hee saw stand by him thirtie great knights more by a yard then any man that ever hee had seene, and all those grinned and gnashed at sir Launcelot, and, when hee saw their countenance, hee dread them sore, and tooke his sword to doe battaile, and they were all armed in blacke harneis, ready with their shields and swords drawen. And when sir Launcelot would have gone through them, they scattered on every side of him, and gave him the way; and therewith hee waxed all bold, and entred into the chappell, and then hee saw no light but a dimme lampe burning, and then was he ware of a corps covered with a cloath of silke; then sir Launcelot stooped downe and cut a peece of that cloath away, and then it fared under him as the earth had quaked a little; and then hee saw a faire sword lye by the dead knight, and that he gat in his hand and hied him out of the chappell. As soone as hee was in the chappell yard, all the knights spake to him with a grimly voice, and said: 'Knight sir Launcelot, lay that sword from thee, or else thou shalt die.' 'Whether I live or die,' said sir Launcelot, 'with no great words get yee it againe, therefore fight for it and yee list.' Therewith he passed through them; and beyond the chappell yard there met him a faire damosell, and said, 'Sir Launcelot, leave that sword behind thee or thou wilt die for it.' 'I will not leave it,' said sir Launcelot, 'for no treats'. 'No,' said she, 'and ye did leave that sword, queene Guenever should ye never see.' 'Then were I a foole and I would leave this sword,' said sir Launcelot. 'Now, gentell knight,' said the damosell, 'I require thee to kisse mee once.' 'Nay,' said sir Launcelot, 'that God forbid.' 'Well, sir,' said she, 'and thou haddest kissed me, thy life dayes had beene done; but, sir Launcelot, now I tell thee, that I have loved thee this seaven yeare, but there may no woman have thy love but queene Guenever.' 'Yee say well,' said sir Launcelot; 'Jesus preserve me from your subtile crafts.' And therewith hee tooke his horse, and departed from her. And as the booke saith, when sir Launcelot

¹ *Treats*.—Caxton has *treatys*; i. e. entreaties.

was departed, she tooke such sorrow that shee died within fifteene dayes¹, and her name was Hellawes the sorceresse, lady of the castle Nigramus. Anon sir Launcelot met with the damosell sir Milliots sister; and then they rode to a castle thereby, where sir Meliot lay. Anon sir Launcelot touched his wounds with sir Gilberts sword, and wiped them with a part of the bloody cloath that sir Gilbert was wrapped in. Anon a wholer man in his life was he never. And so on the morrow sir Launcelot tooke his leave, and sir Meliot to hie him to king Arthurs court.

CHAP. CXIII.—*How sir Launcelot at the request of a lady recovered a fawcon, whereby he was deceived.*

SO sir Launcelot came to a castle, and he was ware of a fawcon that came flying over his head toward an high elme, and long lines² about her feete; and the lines overcaught a bough, and she hung fast by the leggs. In the meane while came a lady out of a castle, and cried on hie: 'Oh, Launcelot! Launcelot! as thou art floure of all knights of the world, helpe me to get my hawke, for, if my hawke be lost, my lord will destroy mee.' 'What is your lords name?' said sir Launcelot. 'Sir,' she said, 'his name is sir Phelot, a knight that longeth to the king of Northgales.' 'Faire lady,' said sir Launcelot, 'I will doe that I may to get your hawke, and yet, God knoweth, I am an il climer, and the tree is passing hie, and few boughs to helpe me withall.' And therewith sir Launcelot alighted, and tied his horse to the same tree, and praied the lady to unarme him. And so hee climbed up to the fawcon, and tied the lunes³ to a great rotten branch, and threw the hawke downe with the branch. And therewithall came sir Phelot out of the groves⁴ suddainely, al armed with his naked sword in his hand, and said: 'Oh, knight sir Launcelot, now have I found thee as I would have thee,' and stood at the bole of the tree to sley him. 'That were shame,' said sir Launcelot, 'that an armed knight should sley a naked man by treason.'

'Thou gettest none other grace,' said sir Phelot. 'Alas,' said sir Launcelot, 'that ever any knight should die weapenlesse.' And therewithall over his head he saw a roundspike⁵ on a big bough leavelesse, and brake it off by the body of the tree, and then hee came lower, and awaited⁶ how his owne horse stood, and suddenly hee lept on the farther side of the horse from the

¹ *Fifteene dayes.*—*Within a fourteen nighte*, Caxton. The old Saxon custom of reckoning time by nights was becoming obsolete in the interval between Caxton's edition and that of 1634.

² *Lines.*—*Lunys*, Caxton. The *lunes* were long lines used for calling in hawks.

³ *Lunes.*—See the note above.

⁴ *Groves.*—*Gravys*, Caxton.

⁵ *Roundspike.*—*A rounspyk*, a bygge bough, Caxton. A *rounespick*, or *rampick*, was a bough of a tree which had lesser branches growing out at its extremity.

⁶ *Awaited.*—i.e. watched.

knight. And then sir Phelot lashed at him egerly, weening to have slaine him, but sir Launcelot put away the strooke with the roundspike, and therewith he smote him on the side of the head that he fell in a sound to the ground. Then sir Launcelot tooke his sword out of his hand, and strooke his neck from the body. Then cried the lady, 'Alas, why hast thou slaine my husband?' 'I am not causer,' said sir Launcelot, 'for ye would have slaine me with treason, and now it is fallen on you both.' And therewithall sir Launcelot got all his armour and departed thence, and thanked our Lord God that he had escaped that adventure.

CHAP. CXIV.—*How sir Launcelot overtooke a knight which chased his wife to have slaine her, and what he said to him.*

SO sir Launcelot rode many wilde wayes, and, as he rode in a valley, he saw a knight chasing a lady with a naked sword to have slaine her. And shee cried on sir Launcelot, and prayed him to rescue her. When sir Launcelot saw that mischief, hee rode betweene them, saying: 'Knight, fie, for shame, why wilt thou sleigh this lady?' 'Sir,' said the knight, 'in your sight I will be ruled as yee will have me.' And so sir Launcelot rode on the one side and the lady on the other side. He had not ridden but a while, but that the knight bad sir Launcelot turne him, and looked behind him, and said, 'Yonder come men of armes riding after us.' And sir Launcelot turned him, and thought no treason. And therewith was the knight and the lady on one side, and suddainly hee strooke off the ladies head. And when sir Launcelot had espied what he had done, he called him traitour, and said, 'Thou hast shamed me for ever.' And suddainly sir Launcelot alighted from his horse, and drew out his sword to have slaine him. And therewith he fel flat to the earth, and caught sir Launcelot by the thighs, and cried him mercy. 'Fie on thee,' said sir Launcelot, 'thou shamefull knight, thou mayest have no mercy, and therefore arise and fight with me.' 'Nay,' said the knight, 'I will not arise til ye graunt me mercy.' 'Well,' said sir Launcelot, 'take this lady and the head, and beare it upon thee, and heere shalt thou swear upon my sword to beare it alway upon thy backe, and never to rest, till thou come unto queene Guenever.' 'Sir,' said hee, 'that will I doe by the faith of my body.' 'Now,' said sir Launcelot, 'tell mee thy name?' 'Sir, my name is Pedivere,' said the knight. So Pedivere departed with the dead lady and the head, and found the queene with king Arthur at Winchester, and there hee told all the truth. 'Sir knight,' said the queene, 'this is an horrible deede and a shameful; but this shal I give you in pennance; yee shall beare this lady with you on horsebacke unto the pope of Rome, and of him receive your pennance for your foule deedes.' And after this sir Pedivere fell to great goodnesse, and was an holy man and an hermit.

CHAP. CXV.—*How sir Launcelot came unto king Arthurs court, and how there were recounted of his noble feates and acts.*

NOW turne wee unto sir Launcelot, that came home two daies afore the feast of Penticost. And when sir Gawaine, sir Ewaine, sir Sagramour, and sir Ector de Maris saw sir Launcelot in sir Kays armour, then they wist wel it was he that smot them down al with one spear. And ever now and then came all the knights home that sir Turquine had taken prisoners, and they all honoured and worshipped sir Launcelot. When sir Gaheris heard them speake, he said: 'I saw al the battaile, from the beginning to the ending.' And there hee told king Arthur all how it was, and how sir Turquine was the strongest knight that ever hee saw except sir Launcelot; there were many knights bare him record, nigh threescore. Then sir Kay told the king how sir Launcelot had rescued him when hee was in danger to have beene slaine, and how 'hee made the knights to yeeld them to me, and not to him.' And there they were, all three, and bare record. 'And by Jesus,' said sir Kay, 'because sir Launcelot tooke my harneis, and left me his, I rode in good peace, and no man would have to doe with me.' Then anon therewithall came the three knights that fought with sir Launcelot at the long bridge, and there they yeilded them unto sir Kay, and sir Kay forsooke them, and said he fought never with them; 'but I shall ease your hearts,' said sir Kay, 'yonder is sir Launcelot that overcame you.' Then sir Meliot de Logres came home, and told king Arthur how sir Launcelot had saved him from death, and all the deedes were knowen, how foure queenes, sorceresses, had him in prison, and how hee was delivered by the daughter of king Bagdemagus. Also, there were told all the great deedes of armes that sir Launcelot did betweene the two kings, that is to say, the king of Northgales and king Bagdemagus, all the truth sir Gahalatine told, and sir Mador de la Porte, and sir Mordred, for they three were at that turnemente. Then came in the lady that knew sir Launcelot when he wounded sir Belleus at that pavilion, and there, at the request of sir Launcelot, sir Belleus was made knight of the round table. And so at that time, sir Launcelot had the greatest name of any knight of the world, and most was hee honoured both of high and low.

CHAP. CXVI.—*How Beaumains came unto king Arthurs court, and demanded three petitions of king Arthur.*

THEN king Arthur commanded that the high feast of Pentecost should be holden at a citie and castle, which in those daies was called King-Kenedon¹, upon the sands that marched

¹ *King-Kenedon.*—Caxton has *Kynke-Kenadonne*.

nigh¹ Wales. And so sir Gawaine, a little before noone of the day of Pentecost, espied at a window three men on horsebacke, and a dwarfe on foote. And so the three men alighted, and the dwarfe kept their horses, and one of the three men was higher then the other twaine by a foote and a halfe. And there were all the knights of the round table, save those that were prisoners or slaine at an encounter. Then at the high feast evermore they should be fulfilled the whole number, an hundred and fiftie, for then was the round table fully accomplished. Right so came into the hall two men well beseene and richly, and upon their shoulders there leaned the goodliest young man and the fairest that ever they saw, and he was large, long, and broad in the shoulders, and well visaged, and the fairest and the largest hands that ever man saw, but he fared as though he might not goe nor beare himselfe, but if hee leaned upon their shoulders. Anon, as king Arthur saw him, they went with him unto the hie dees³, without saying any word, and then this bigge young man drew him backe, and easily stretched up straight, saying to king Arthur, 'God blesse you, and al your faire fellowship, and in especial the fellowship of the round table. And for this cause I am come hither, for to pray you to give me three gifts, and they shall not bee unreasonably asked, but that yee may worshipfully and honourably graunt them unto me. And as for the first gift I will aske now, and the other two giftes I will aske at the same day twelve moneths wheresoever that ye hold your high feast.' 'Now aske,' said king Arthur, 'and yee shall have your petition.' 'Now, sir,' said he, 'this is my petition for this feast, that ye will give me meate and drinke sufficiently for these twelve-monethes, and at that day I will aske mine other two giftes.' 'My faire sonne,' said king Arthur, 'aske better, I counsaile thee, for this is but a simple asking.' 'Sir,' said he, 'as for that, be it as it may bee, I have asked that I will aske.' 'Well,' said king Arthur, 'yee shall have meate and drinke enough. But what is thy name? I would faine know.' 'I can not tell you,' said hee. 'That have I marvaile of thee,' said the king, 'that thou knowest not thine owne name, and thou art one of the goodliest young men that ever I saw.' Then the noble king Arthur betooke him unto the steward sir Kay, and charged him that hee should give him of all manner of meates and drinkes of the best, 'and also that he have all manner of finding, as though hee were a lords sonne.' 'That shall little neede,' said sir Kay, 'to doe such cost upon him, for I dare well undertake that hee is a villaine⁴ borne, for and hee had beene a gentleman, hee would have asked of you horse and harneis, but

¹ *Marched nigh*.—Bordered upon.

² *The largest hands*.—*The fayrest and the largest handed*, Caxton.

³ *Hie dees*.—The high dais, or table at the head of the hall, where the persons of greatest dignity were seated.

⁴ *A villaine*.—i. e. a churl, or peasant; one of ignoble birth.

such as hee is he hath asked. And sithen hee hath no name, I shall give him a name, that shal be Beaumains, that is to say, faire hands; and into the kitchen I shall bring him, and there he shall have fat browesse¹ every day, that he shall bee as fat by the twelve-monethes end as a porke hog.' Right so the two men that had brought him departed, and left him to sir Kay, that scorned and mocked him.

CHAP. CXVII.—*How sir Launcelot and sir Gawaine were wroth because sir Kay mocked Beaumains, and of a damosell which desired a knight for to doe battaile for a lady.*

THEREAT was sir Gawaine wroth, and especially sir Launcelot, for hee bad sir Kay leave his mocking, 'Let be,' said sir Kay, 'for as he is, so hath he asked.' And so sir Kay had got him a place, and sat downe to meate. So Beaumains went to the hall dore, and sat him downe among boyes and lads, and there hee eate sadly. And then sir Launcelot, after meate, bad him come to his chamber; and so did sir Gawaine. But hee refused them all; hee would doe nothing but as sir Kay commanded him, for no profer. But as touching sir Gawaine, he had reason to proffer him lodging, meate, and drinke; for that proffer came of his blood, for hee was neerer kinne to him then hee wist. So thus he was put into the kitchen, and lay every night as the boyes of the kitchen did; and so he endured al those twelve-monethes, and never displeased man nor child. But ever when hee knew of any justing of knights, that would he see and hee might. And ever sir Launcelot would give him gold to spend and cloathes, and so did sir Gawaine. And where as were any masteries² done, there would hee be; and there might none cast the barre or stone to him by two yards. Then would sir Kay say, 'How like you my boy of the kitchen?' So it passed on till the feast of Pentecost, and at that time the king held it at Carlion, in the most royallest wise that might be, like as yerele hee did. And then came there a squire to the king, and said: 'Sir, here commeth a damosell with some strange adventure.' Right so there came in a damosell, and saluted the king, and praied him for succour. 'For whom?' said the king: 'what is the adventure?' 'Sir,' said she, 'I have a lady of great worship and renown, and she is besieged with a tyrant, so that shee may not goe out of her castle.' 'What call ye your lady, and where dwelleth she, and who is hee and what is his name that hath besieged her?' 'Sir king,' said shee, 'as for my ladies name, that shall not bee knowne for me as at this time. And as for the tyrant that besiegeth her and destroyeth her land, hee is called the red knight of

¹ *Browesse.*—Fat broth.

² *Masteries.*—Trials of skill.

the reede lands.' 'I know him not,' said the king. 'Sir,' said sir Gawaine, 'I know him well; and men say that hee hath seaven mens strength, and from him I escaped once full hard with my life.' 'Faire damosell,' said the king, 'there bee knights heere that would doe their power to rescue your lady, but because ye wil not tell her name nor where she dwelleth, therefore none of my knights that be here now shall goe with you by my will.' 'Then must I speake further,' said the damosell.

CHAP. CXVIII.—*How Beaumains desired the battaile, and how it was graunted him, and how he desired to be made knight of sir Launcelot.*

THEN with these words came before the king Beaumains, and thus he said: 'Sir king, God thanke you, I have beene this twelve monethes in your kitchen, and have had my full sustenance, and now I will aske my two gifts that bee behind: first, that ye will grant mee to have this adventure of the damosell, for it belongeth to me.' 'Thou shalt have it,' said the king; 'Then, sir, this is now the other gift; that ye shall bid sir Launcelot du Lake to make me a knight, for of him I will bee made knight, and else of none.' 'All this shall be done,' said the king. 'Fie on thee,' said the damosell; 'shal I have none but one that is your kitchen page?' Then was shee wroth, and tooke her horse and departed. And with that there came one to Beaumains, and told him that his horse and armour was come for him, and there was a dwarfe come with all things that him needed in the richest manner. Thereat all the court had much marvaile from whence came all that geare. So when hee was armed, there was none but few so goodly a man as hee was. And right so he came into the hall, and tooke his leave of king Arthur and of sir Gawaine, and of sir Launcelot, and prayed him that he would hie after him; and so departed and rode after the damosell.

CHAP. CXIX.—*How Beaumains departed, and how he got of sir Kay a speare and a shield, and how he jused and fought with sir Launcelot.*

BUT there went many after to behold how well he was horsed and trapped in cloth of gold, but hee had neither shield nor speare. Then sir Kay said openly in the hall: 'I will ride after my boy of the kitching, for to wit whether hee will know mee for his better.' So sir Kay made him ready, and tooke his horse and his speare, and rode after him. And right as Beaumains overtooke the damosell, so came sir Kay, and said: 'What, sir Beaumains, know yee not mee?' Then hee turned his horse, and knew that it was sir Kay, 'Yee,' said Beaumains, 'I know you for an ungentle knight of the

court, and therefore beware of me.' Therewith sir Kay put his speare in the rest, and runne straight to him, and Beaumains came as fast upon him with his sword in his hand; and so hee put away the speare with his sword, and with a foyne thrust him through the side, that sir Kay fell downe as hee had beene dead; and he alight downe, and tooke sir Kays shield and his speare, and start upon his owne horse and rode his way. And then he bad his dwarfe start upon sir Kays horse. By that sir Lancelot was come. Then he profered sir Lancelot to just, and either made them ready, and came together so fiercely that either bare downe other to the earth, and sore were they brused. Then sir Lancelot arose, and helped him to avoyd his horse. And then Beaumains profered to fight with sir Lancelot on foote, and so they rashed together like two wild bores, and sir Lancelot felt him so big, that hee mervailed of his strength, for sir Lancelot had much adoe with him, that hee dread himselfe to bee ashamed, and said: 'Beaumains, fight not so sore; your quarrell and mine is not so great but wee may leave off.' 'Truly that is truth,' said Beaumains.

CHAP. CXX.—*How Beaumains told his name to sir Lancelot, and how hee was dubbed knight of sir Lancelot, and after overtooke the damosell.*

'IN Gods name,' said sir Lancelot, 'for I promise you by the faith of my body I had as much to doe as I might to save my selfe from you unshamed, and therefore have no doubt of none earthly knight.' 'Then I pray you,' said Beaumains, 'give mee the order of knighthood.' 'Then must yee tell mee your name,' said sir Lancelot, 'and of what kinne yee bee borne.' 'Sir, so that you will not discover me, I shall tell you,' said Beaumains, 'my name is Gareth of Orkeney, and brother unto sir Gawaine of father and mother.' And then sir Lancelot gave him the order of knighthood. So sir Lancelot departed from him, and came to sir Kay, and made him to bee borne upon his shield, and so he was healed hard with his life. And so wee leave off sir Kay, and turne wee unto Beaumains. When he had overtaken the damosell, anone shee said: 'What doest thou heere? thou stinkest all of the kitching;' 'Damosell,' said sir Beaumains, 'say to mee what ye list, I will not goe from you whatsoever yee say, for I have undertaken of king Arthur for to atchieve your adventure, and I shall finish it to the end, or I shall die therefore.' So as they thus rode in the wood, there came a man flying all that he might. 'Whether wilt thou?' said Beaumains. 'O lord,' said he, 'helpe mee, for hereby in a slade are six theeves which have taken my lord and bound him, and I am afraid least they will slay him.' 'Bring mee thither,' said sir Beaumains. And so they rode together till they came there as the knight was

bound, and then hee rode unto the theeves and slew three of them; and then the other three fled, but at the last sir Beaumains overtooke them and slew them; and then returned and unbound the knight. And the knight thanked him, and prayed him to ride with him to his castle there a little beside, and he should worshipfully reward him for his good deedes. 'Sir,' said sir Beaumains, 'I must follow this damosell.' Then the same knight which was rescued of the theeves rode after the damosell, and prayed her to lodge with him all that night. And at supper the knight set sir Beaumains before the damosell. 'Fie, fie,' said shee, 'sir knight, yee are uncurteous for to set a kitching page before me; him beseemeth better to sticke a swine then to sit before a damosell of high parentage.'

CHAP. CXXI.—*How sir Beaumains fought and slew two knights at a passage.*

SO on the morrow the damosell and he tooke their leave, and rode till they came to a great forrest, and there was a great river and but one passage, and there were redy two knights on the further side, to let them the passage. 'What saist thou?' said the damosell; 'wilt thou match yonder two knights, or wilt thou returne againe?' 'Nay,' said sir Beaumains, 'I will not returne againe, and they were sixe moe.' And therewith hee rashed¹ into the water, and met one of the knights. Then sir Beaumains smote the other upon the helme that his head was astonied², and therewith hee fell downe into the water, and there was drowned. And then hee spurred his horse unto the land, where the other knight fell upon him and so they fought long together. At the last sir Beaumains clove his helme and his head unto the shoulders. And then hee rode unto the damosell, and bad her ride forth on her way. 'Alas,' said shee, 'that ever kitching page should have the fortune to destroy such two doughty knights!' 'Well, damosell, yee may say what yee will, but wheresoever that yee goe, I will follow you.' So thus sir Beaumains rode with the damosell untill even-song, and ever shee chid him and would not rest. And then they came to a blacke laund, and there was a blacke hawthorne, and thereon hung a blacke baner, and on the other side there hung a blacke shield, and by it stood a black speare and a long, and a greate blacke horse covered with silke, and a blacke stone fast by it.

¹ *Rashed*.—Caxton, *Rasshyd*. Dashed; rushed.

² *Astonied*.—Stunned.

CHAP. CXXII.—*How sir Beaumains fought with the knight of the blacke launds', and he fought so long with him that the blacke knight fell downe and dyed.*

THERE sate a knight all armed in blacke harneis, and his name was the knight of the blacke laundes. With that the blacke knight came to the damosell, and said, 'Faie damosell, have yee brought this knight from king Arthurs court to be your champion?' 'Nay, faie knight,' said shee, 'this is but a kitching knave, that hath beene fed in king Arthurs kitching for almes: and because he rideth with me, he seemeth some man of worship borne.' 'That may well be,' said the blacke knight, 'I shall put him downe upon his feete, and his horse and his armour he shall leave with mee, for it were shame for mee to doe him any more harme.' When sir Beaumains heard him say thus to her, hee said, 'Sir knight, thou art full large² of my horse and my harneis; I let thee to wit it cost thee nought; but horse nor harneis gettest thou none of me, but if thou winne them with thy hands; and therefore let mee see what thou canst doe.' 'Saigest thou that,' said the blacke knight, 'now yeeld thy lady from thee lightly, for it beseemeth not a kitchin knave to ride with such a lady.' 'Thou liest,' said sir Beaumains, 'I am a gentleman borne, and of more high linage then thou art, and that I will prove upon thy body.' Then in great wrath they departed with their horses, and came together as it had beene thunder. But at the last the blacke knight within an houre and a halfe fell downe from his horse, and there died forthwith. And when sir Beaumains saw him so wel horsed and armed, he alighted down, and armed him in his armour, and so tooke his horse and rode after the damosell.

CHAP. CXXIII.—*How the brother of the knight that was slaine met with sir Beaumains, and fought with sir Beaumains, which yeelded him at the last.*

THUS as they rode together they saw a knight come driving by them all in greene, both his horse and his harneis, and when hee came nigh the damosell, hee asked of her, 'Is that my brother the blacke knight that ye have brought with you?' 'Nay, nay,' said she, 'this unhappie kitchin knave hath slaine your brother through unhappinesse.' 'A! traitour,' said the greene knight, 'thou shalt die for slaying of my brother; he was a full noble knight, and his name was sir Pereard.' 'I defie thee,' said sir Beaumains, 'for I let thee to wit I slew him

¹ *Launds*.—*Knight of the blak launde*, Caxton. The edition of 1634 has throughout printed *land* and *lands* for *laund* and *launds*.

² *Large*.—i.e. generous; liberal.

knightly, and not shamefully.' There withall the greene knight rode unto an horne that was greene, and it hung upon a thorne, and there he blew three deadly notes¹, and there came three² damosells that lightly³ armed him. And then they ranne together with all their might, and brake their speares to their hands. And then anon they drew out their swords and they rashed together like two mightie champions⁴ a long while, and they bled sore both. With that came the damosell, and said, 'My lord the greene knight, for shame, why stand yee so long fighting with that kitchin knave? alas! it is shame that ever yee were made a knight, for to see such a stinking boy match such a valiant knight as ye bee.' The greene knight hearing these words was ashamed, and incontinent he gave sir Beaumains a mightie strook and clove his shield throughout; but sir Beaumains gave the greene knight such a buffet upon the helme that hee fell on his knees, and suddenly sir Beaumains threw him downe on the ground groveling. And incontinent the greene knight cried sir Beaumains mercy, and yelded him unto sir Beaumains, and praied him to grant him his life. 'All this is in vaine,' said sir Beaumains, 'for thou shalt die but if this damosell which is come with me pray me to save thy life.' 'Fie upon thee, thou kitchin page, I will never pray thee to save his life. For I will never bee so much in thy danger⁵.' 'Oh, faire knight,' said the greene knight, 'save my life, and I will forgive the death of my brother, and for ever to become thy man, and thirtie knights that hold of mee for ever shall doe you service.' 'Sir knight,' said sir Beaumains, 'all this availeth not, but if my damosell speake with me for thy life.' And therewithall he made resemblance to sley him. 'Let be,' said the damosell, 'sley him not, for if thou doe, thou shalt repent it.' 'Damosell,' said sir Beaumains, 'your charge is to mee a pleasure, and at your commandement his life shall be saved.' Then he said, 'Sir knight with the greene armes, I release thee quit at this damosels request.' And then the green knight kneeled down and did him homage with his sword. So they tooke their horses and rode unto his mannor, which was fast there beside.

CHAP. CXXIV — *How the damosell alwayes rebuked sir Beaumains, and would not suffer him to sit at her table, but called him kitchin page.*

AND alwayes the damosell rebuked sir Beaumains. 'Mee thinketh marvaile,' said the greene knight to the damosell, 'why that yee rebuke this noble knight as yee doe, for I warne

¹ Notes.—*Motys*, Caxton.

² Three.—*Two*, Caxton.

³ Lightly.—i. e. quickly.

⁴ Champions.—*Kempys*, Caxton. Both words have the same signification, and were formed from the same root.

⁵ In thy danger.—i. e. under obligation to thee.

you, damosell, hee is a full noble knight, and he shall doe you right good service, for yee shall prove at the end that hee is come of noble blood, and of kings linage.' And so that night they went unto their rest, and on the morrow the greene knight conveyed them through the forrest, and then the greene knight said, 'My lord sir Beaumains, I and my thirtie knights shall bee alway at your command, both early and late, at your calling, and where soever yee will send us.' 'Fie, fie upon thee, in the divels name,' said the damosel, 'that any good knight should be obedient unto a kitchin knave.' And then she said to sir Beaumains, 'Why followest thou me, thou kitchin boy? cast away thy shield and thy speare, I counsaile thee yet, and flee away betimes, or thou shalt say soone alas! for were thou as mightie as ever was Wade¹, or sir Launcelot, sir Tristram, or the good knight sir Lamorake, thou shalt not passe a pace heereby, that is called the pace perilous².' 'Damosell,' said sir Beaumains, 'who is afeard, let him flee, for it were shame to turne againe, sith I have ridden so long with you.' 'Well,' said the damosell, 'thou shalt see soone whether thou wilt or not.'

CHAP. CXXV.—*How the third brother, called the red knight, justed and fought against sir Beaumains, and how sir Beaumains overcame him.*

SO within a while they saw a tower as white as any snow, and over the tower gate there hung fiftie shields of divers coulours. And under that tower there was a faire meadow, and there on the morrow should bee a great turnement at that castle, and the lord of that tower looked out at a window, and saw a damosel and a page, and a knight armed at all points. 'So God mee helpe,' said the lord, 'with that knight will I just, for I see that he is a knight arraunt.' And he armed him in red armour; and when he came nigh sir Beaumains, he wend he had beene his brother the blacke knight, and then hee cried aloud: 'Brother, what doe yee heere in these marches?' 'Nay, nay,' said the damosell, 'it is not your brother; this is but a kitchin knave, which hath beene brought up for almes in king Arthurs court.' 'Neverthelesse,' said the red knight, 'I will speake with him or he depart.'

'Ah,' said the damosell, 'this unhapie knave hath slaine your brother, and sir Kay named him Beaumains, and this horse and

¹ *Wade*.—This is a curious allusion to one of the personages of Northern mythology, the romance of whom, as it existed in our island, seems to be lost. Some incidents in it are alluded to by Chaucer, and by one or two other old writers. The northern account of him is given in the *Wilkins Saga*. The notices of this hero are collected in a pamphlet entitled, 'Wade; Lettre à M. Henri Ternaux-Compans,—par Fr. Michel, Paris, 1837.'

² *Pace perilous*.—The perilous pass.

harneis was your brothers the blacke knight. Also I saw him overcome your brother the greene knight, with his owne hands. Now may yee bee revenged upon him, for I cannot bee quit of him.' And with this, both the knights departed asunder, and they came together with all their might, and either gave to other many sad strookes for the space of three houres. Yet at the last sir Beaumains strooke him to the earth; and as hee would have slaine the red knight, he cried mercy, saying: 'Noble knight, sley me not, and I shal yeeld me unto thee with fiftie knights that be at my command; and I forgive thee all the despite that thou hast done to me, and the death of my brother the blacke knight.' 'All this availeth thee not,' said sir Beaumains, 'but if my damosell pray me to save thy life.' And therewith he made resemblance to strik off his head. 'Let be, thou Beaumains, sley him not, for he is a noble knight, and not so hardy upon thine head but that thou save him.' Then sir Beaumains bad the red knight stand up, 'and thanke yee now the damosell for your life.' Then the red knight prayed him to see his castle, and to be there all that night; and so the damosell granted him, and there they had merry cheere. But alwaies the damosell spake many foule words unto sir Beaumains, whereof the red knight had great marvaile. And on the morrow they heard masse; and the red knight came before sir Beaumains with his threescore knights, and there he proffered him his homage and feaultie at al times hee and his knights to doe him service. So sir Beaumains and the damosell departed, and ever she rode chiding him in the foulest manner.

CHAP. CXXVI. — *How sir Beaumains suffered great rebukes of the damosell, and he suffered it patiently.*

'DAMOSSELL,' said sir Beaumains, 'yee are uncurteous so to rebuke me as ye doe, for me seemeth I have done you great service; and therefore I pray you rebuke mee no more, and when ye see mee beaten or yeelden recreaunt, then may yee bid me goe from you shamefully.' 'Well,' said she, 'right soone there shall meete with thee a knight that shall pay thee all thy wages, for he is the man of the most worship in the world, except king Arthur.' Then anon within a while they were ware where as was before them a faire citie, and betweene them and the citie a mile and a halfe there was a faire meadow, and therein were many pavilions goodly to behold. 'Loe,' said the damosell, 'yonder is a lord that oweth yonder citie, and his custome is such, that when the weather is faire he lieth in this meadow for to just and turney.' And so as she rode neere shee espied the pavilion where he was. 'Loe,' said shee, 'seest thou

yonder pavilion that is all of the coulour of Inde¹, and all manner thing that is about him, both men and women, and horses trapped, shields and speares, were all of the colour of Inde; and his name is sir Persaunt of Inde, the most lordliest knight that ever thou lookedst on.' 'It may well be,' said sir Beaumains, 'but be he never so stout a knight, in this field I shall abide till that I see him under his shield.' 'Fie, fie,' said the damosel, 'that ever such a stinking knave should blow such a boast.'

'Damosell,' said sir Beaumains, 'yee are to blame so to rebuke me, for I had rather to doe five batailles then so to be rebuked. Let him come, and then let him doe his worst.' 'Sir,' said shee, 'I marvaile what thou art, and of what kinne thou art come; boldly thou speakest, and boldly thou hast done, that have I wel seene; therefore I pray thee save thy selfe and thou maiest, for thine horse and thou have had great travaile, and I dread me we dwel overlong from the siege, for it is but seven mile hence, and all perilous passages we are past, save all onely this passage, and here I dread me full sore, lest that ye shall catch some hurt or damage; but I let you to wit that this sir Persaunt of Inde is nothing of might nor of strength unto the knight that hath laid the siege about my lady.' 'As for that,' said sir Beaumains, 'be it as it may, for sith I am come so nigh this good knight, I will prove his might or I depart from him; and therefore, damosell, have ye no doubt by the grace of God I shall so deale with this knight that within two houres after noone ye shall deliver him, and then shall wee come to the siege by day-light.' 'Oh, Jesus,' said the damosel, 'I have marvaile what manner of man ye be, for it may never be otherwise but that yee be come of a noble blood, for more fowler nor more shamefuller did never woman rule nor rebuke a knight as I have done to you, and ever curteously yee have suffered me, and that came never but of a gentle blood and linage.' 'Damosell,' said sir Beaumains, 'a knight may little doe that may not suffer a damosel; and whether I be a gentleman borne or no, faire damosell, I have done you gentlemans service, and peradventure better service yet will I doe you or I depart from you.' 'Alas,' said shee, 'faire sir Beaumains, forgive me all that I have missayed and misdona against you.' 'With all my heart,' said sir Beaumains, 'I forgive it you; and, damosell, sith it liketh you to speake thus faire to mee, me seemeth there is no knight living but I am able enough for him.'

Colour of Inde.—A dark blue colour, often mentioned by the mediaeval writers.

CHAP. CXXVII.—*How sir Beaumains fought with sir Persaunt of Inde¹, and made him to be yeelden.*

WITH this sir Persaunt of Inde¹ had espied them, as they hoved² in the field, and knightly hee sent to them to know whether hee came in warre or in peace. 'Say unto thy lord,' said sir Beaumains, 'I take no force³, but whether as him list himselfe.' So the messenger went againe unto sir Persaunt, and told him all his answer. 'Well,' said hee, 'then will I have adoe with him to the uttermost;' and so he purveied him, and rode against him. And when sir Beaumains saw him, hee made him ready, and there they met with all the might that their horses might run, and they fought two houres and more, that their shields and their hawberkes were all forhewen⁴, and in many places they were sore wounded. And at the last sir Beaumains smote sir Persaunt on the helme that hee fell grovelling to the earth; and then sir Persaunt yeelded him, and asked him mercy. With that came the damosell and prayed him to save his life. 'I will well,' said sir Beaumains, 'for it were pittie that this noble knight should die.' 'Gramercie,' said sir Persaunt, 'gentle knight and damosell, for certainly now I know well it was you that slew my brother sir Periard, the black knight: and also I am sure that ye wan mine other brothers sir Pertolope, the greene knight, and sir Perimones, the red knight. And now, sir, this shall I doe for to please you: yee shall have homage and feaultie of mee, and an hundred knights to bee alwayes at your command, to goe and ride where yee will command us.' And so they went unto sir Persaunts pavilion, and there hee drank wine and eate spices. And afterward sir Persaunt made him to rest upon a bed till it was supper time, and after supper to bed againe. And so we leave him there till on the morrow.

CHAP. CXXVIII.—*Of the goodly communication between sir Persaunt and sir Beaumains, and how he told him that his name was sir Gareth.*

ON the morrow the damosell and sir Beaumains heard masse, and brake their fast, and so tooke their leave. 'Faie damosell,' said sir Persaunt, 'whetherward are yee away leading this knight?' 'Sir,' said she, 'this knight is going to the siege, that besiegeth my sister in the castle Dangerous.' 'Now shall I tell you,' said sir Persaunt, 'this red knight of the red launds hath leyen long at the siege well nigh these two yeares, and he prolongeth the time to this intent, for to have sir Launcelot du Lake to doe battaile with him, or sir Tristram,

¹ *Sir Persaunt of Inde*.—It must not be supposed that sir Persaunt was an Indian; but he was merely named from the colour he wore, like the black knight and the green knight. See before, p. 173.

² *Hoved*.—Loitered, hovered.

³ *No force*.—I care not.

⁴ *Forhewen*.—Hewn to pieces.

Or sir Lamoracke de Gales, or sir Gawain; and for this cause hee tarrieth so long at the siege.' 'Now my lord sir Persaunt,' said the damosell Lynet, 'I require you that yee will make this gentleman knight or ever he fight with the red knight.' 'I will with all my heart,' said sir Persaunt, 'and it please him to take the order of knighthood of so simple a man as I am.' 'Sir,' said sir Beaumains, 'I thanke you for your good will, for I am better sped, for certainly the noble knight sir Launcelot made mee knight.' 'Ah,' said sir Persaunt, 'of a more renowned knight might yee not bee made knight, for all the world saith that betweene three knights is parted cleerely knighthood'; that is, sir Launcelot du Lake, sir Tristram de Lyones, and sir Lamoracke de Gales; but if yee may match the red knight, yee shall bee called the fourth of the world.' 'Sir,' said sir Beaumains, 'I would faine have a good fame of knighthood, and I let you to wit I came of good men, for my father was a noble man, and so that yee will keepe it close and this damosell, I would tell you of what kinne I am.' 'Wee will not discover you,' said they both, 'till yee commaund us, by the faith that wee owe unto God.' 'Truely,' said hee, 'my name is sir Gareth of Orkeny, and king Lot was my father, and my mother is king Arthurs sister, whose name is dame Morgawse, and sir Gawaine is my brother, and sir Agravine and sir Gaheris, and I am the yongest of them all, and yet knoweth not king Arthur nor sir Gawaine what I am.'

CHAP. CXXIX.—*How the lady which was besieged had word from her sister how she had brought a knight to fight for her, and what battailes he had done.*

SO the booke saith that the lady that was besieged had word of her sisters comming by the dwarfe, and brought a knight with her, and how hee had passed all the perilous passages.

'How escaped hee,' said the lady, 'from the brethren of sir Persaunt?' 'Madame,' said he, 'as a noble knight should doe. First he slew two brethren at a passage of a water; and the blacke knight hee slew at the blacke thorne: and after hee fought first the greene knight, then the red knight, and then the blew knight; and he wan them all three. And yet hee did more, hee overthrew sir Kay and left him nigh dead upon the earth. Also he did great battaile with sir Launcelot, and there they departed on even hands, and then sir Launcelot made him knight.' The lady said, 'Dwarfe, I am glad of these tidings, therefore goe thou in an hermitage of mine here beside, and thither shalt thou beare with thee of my wine in two flagons of silver, they are of two gallons, and also two casts² of bread,

¹ *Knighthood*.—This word is here used in the sense of chivalry.

² *Two casts*.—*Cast* was a term for a certain measure of bread. The exact quantity is not known, but it has been conjectured to mean the piece of several loaves attached together as it was drawn from the oven. It may be remarked that most of the heroes

with fat venison baked, and daintie foules, and a cup of gold; and when thou hast thus done, goe to my sister and greete her well, and recommend me unto that gentle knight, and pray him to eate and drinke and make him strong, and say yee to him that I thanke him of his curtesie and goodnesse.' So this dwarfe departed and came to sir Persaunt, where hee found the damosell Lynet and sir Beaumains, and there hee told them all as yee have heard; and then they tooke their leave, but sir Persaunt tooke an ambling hackney and conveied them on their way, and then betooke them unto God. And so within a little while they came unto the hermitage, and there they dranke the wine, and eate the venison and the foules baken. And so when they had repasted them well, the dwarfe returned with his vessell unto the castle againe, and there met with him the red knight of the red launds, and asked him from whence hee came, and where hee had beene. 'Sir,' said the dwarfe, 'I have beene with my ladies sister of this castle, and she hath beene at king Arthurs court, and hath brought a knight with her.' 'Then I accompt her travaile lost, for though she had brought with her sir Launcelot, sir Tristram, sir Lamorake, and sir Gawaine, I would thinke my selfe good enough for them.'

CHAP. CXXX.—*How the damosel and sir Beaumains came to the siege, and came to a sickamore tree, and there sir Beaumains blew an horne, and then the knight of the red launds came to fight with him.*

NOW speake we of sir Beaumains, that all night lay in the hermitage, and on the morrow hee and the damosell Lynet heard a masse and brake their fast. And then they tooke their horses and rode throughout a faire forrest, and then they came unto a plaine, and saw whereas were many pavilions and tents, and a faire castle, and there was much smoake and great noyse. And when they came neare the siege, sir Beaumains espied upon great trees, as hee rode, how there hung goodly armed knights by the neckes, and their shields about their neckes with their swords, and gilted spurres upon their heeles, and so there hung shamefully nigh forty knights with rich armes. Then sir Beaumains abated his countenance, and said, 'What thing meaneth this?' 'Faire sir,' saith the damosell, abate not your cheere for all this sight, for all these knights came hither unto this siege to rescue my sister dame Lyones, and when the red knight of the red launds had overcome them, hee put them to this shamefull death, and in the same wise hee will serve you, but if yee quit you the better.' 'Truely,' said sir Beaumains, 'hee may well bee a good knight, but hee useth shamefull customes, and it is great mervaile that hee endureth so long, that none of the noble knights of my lord king Arthurs

of these romances of chivalry were, as a rule, great eaters and drinkers, and few liked to fight upon an empty stomach.

court have not dealt with him.' And then they rode unto the ditches¹, and saw them double ditched with full strong wals, and there were lodged many great estates and lords nigh the wals, and there was great noyse of minstrels, and the sea beat upon the one side of the wals, where as were many ships and mariners noyse with hale and how². And also there was fast by a sickamore tree, and thereon hung an horne, the greatest that ever they saw, of an olifants bone³. 'And this knight of the red launds hath hanged it up there, that if there come any arraunt knight, he must blow that horne, and then will he make him ready and come out unto him to doe battaile with him ; but, sir, I pray you,' said the damosell Lynet, 'blow yee not the horne till it bee high noone, for now it is about prime, and now encreaseth his might, which as men say hee hath seaven mens strength.' 'Ah ! fie for shame, faire damosell, say yee never so more to mee, for and he were as good a knight as ever was, I shall never faile him in his most might, for either will I worshipfully winne worship, or die knightly in the field.' And therewith he spurred his horse unto the sycamore tree, and blew the horne so egerly, that all the siege and the castle rang thereof. Then the red knight of the red launds armed him hastily, and two barons set on his spurres upon his heeles, and all was blood red, his armour, speare, and shield, and an earle buckled his helme upon his head ; and then they brought him a red speare and a steed, and so hee rode into a little vale under the castle, that all that were in the castle and at the siege might behold the battaile.

CHAP. CXXXI.—*How the two knights met together, and how they began their battaile.*

'SIR,' said the damosell Lynet unto sir Beaumains, 'looke that yee be mery and light, for yonder is your deadly enemy, and at yonder window is my lady my sister dame Lyones.' And ever hee looked up to the window with glad cheere. And the lady Lioness made curtesie to him down to the ground, holding up her hands. With that the red knight of the red launds called to sir Beaumains, 'Leave, sir knight, thy looking, and behold mee, I counsaile thee, for I warne thee well shee is my lady, and for her I have done many strong battailes.' Then sir Beaumains bad the damosell goe from him, and then they put their speares in their rests, and came together with all the might they had, and either smote other in the mids of their shields, that the paytrels, sursengles, and crowpers⁴ brast, and fell both to the ground with the raines of

¹ *Ditches*.—i.e. the entrenchments which surrounded the camp of the besieging army.

² *Hale and how*.—Was the usual cry of the mariners at their work.

³ *Olifants bone*.—Elephant's bone ; i.e. ivory.

⁴ *Paytrels, sursengles, and crowpers*.—The *paytrel* was the breast-plate of the horse ; *sursingle*, the girth of the horse-cloth ; and *crowper*, of course, the crupper.

their bridles in their hands, and so they lay a great while sore astonied, and all they that were in the castle and at the siege wend their necks had beene broken. Then they lightly avoided their horses and put their shields afore them, and drew their swords and ranne together like two fierce lyons.

CHAP. CXXXII.—*How, after long fighting, sir Beaumains overcame the knight, and would have slaine him, but at the request of the lords hee saved his life and made him to yeeld him to the lady.*

AND thus still they fought till it was past noone and would not stint, till at the last they both lacked wind, and then they stood wagging, staggering, panting, blowing, and bleeding, so that all those that beheld them for the most part wept for pittie. And when they had rested them a while, they went to battaile againe; and thus they endured till even-song time, that there was none that there beheld them might know whether was likeliest to winne the battaile. And the red knight was a wily knight of warre, and his wily fighting taught sir Beaumains to be wise, but full sore he bought¹ it or he espied his fighting. And thus by assent of them both, they granted each other to rest a while, and so they set them downe upon two mole-hills there beside the fighting place, and either of them unlaced his helme and tooke the cold wind. And then when sir Beaumains helme was off, he looked up unto the window, and there hee saw the faire lady dame Lyones. And shee made to him such countenance, that his heart was light and joyfull. And therewith he start up sudenly, and bad the red knight make him ready to doe the battaile to the uttermost. And then they laced up their helmes, and their pages avoided², and they stept together and fought fiercely³. But sir Beaumains doubled his strookes and smote so thicke, that he smote the sword out of the red knights hand, and then hee smote him upon the helme, that he fell to the ground, and sir Beaumains fell upon him and unlaced his helme for to have slaine him.

And then the red knight said with a loud voice, 'Oh, noble knight, I yeeld mee unto thy mercy!' Then sir Beaumains bethought him upon the knights that he had made to be hanged so shamefully, and then he said, 'I may not with my worship save thy life, for the shamefull deathes that thou hast caused so many good knights to die.' 'Sir,' said the red knight of the red launds, 'hold ye your hands, and ye shall know the cause why I put them to so shamefull a death. I loved once a lady, a faire damosell, and shee had her brother slaine, and shee said it was sir Launcelot du Lake, or sir Gawaine, and shee prayed mee that I would make her a promise by the faith of my knighthood,

¹ *Bought*.—*He aboughte hit*, Caxton.

² *Avoided*.—Went from them, or aside.

³ *Fiercelly*.—*Fressshelly*, Caxton.

for to labour dayly in armes unto the time that I had met with one of them, and all that I might overcome, that I should put them to a villainous death; and so I ensured her to doe all this villanie unto king Arthurs knights, and that I should take vengeance upon al his knights. And, sir, now I will tell thee that every day my strength encreaseth til noone, and al this time have I seven mens strength.'

CHAP. CXXXIII.—*How the knight yeilded him, and how sir Beaumains made him to goe unto king Arthurs court, and to crie sir Launcelot mercy.*

THEN came there many earles and barons and noble knights, and prayed sir Beaumains to save his life and to take him prisoner, and all they fell upon their knees and prayed him of mercy, and that hee would save his life. 'Faire lords,' said sir Beaumains, 'wit you well I am full loth to slay this knight, neverthelesse hee hath done passing ill and shamefully. But insomuch as all that hee did was at a ladies request, I blame him the lesse, and for your sakes he shal have his life upon this covenant, that hee goe within the castle and yeeld him there to the lady: and also, when that is done, that hee goe unto the court of king Arthur, and there that hee aske sir Launcelot and sir Gawaine, for the evill will that hee hath had against them.' 'Sir,' said the red knight of the red launds, 'all this will I doe as yee command, and siker assurance and borowes¹ ye shall have.' And then, when the assurance was made, hee made his homage and feaultie, and all those earles and barons with him. And then the damosell Lynet came unto sir Beaumains, and unarmed him, and searched his wounds, and stinted his blood, and in like wise she did to the red knight of the red launds. And so they sojourned ten days in their tents. And within a while after, the red knight of the red launds went unto the castle and put him in the lady Lyones grace: and then hee departed and went unto the court of king Arthur, and there put him in the mercy of sir Launcelot and sir Gawaine, and told how he was overcome, and by whom, and of all the batailles, from the beginning to the ending. 'Jesus, mercie,' said king Arthur and sir Gawaine, 'we marvaile much of what blood he is come, for he is a full noble knight.'

CHAP. CXXXIV.—*How sir Beaumains came to the lady, and when he came unto the castle the gates were closed against him, and of the words that the lady said unto him.*

NOW returne we unto sir Beaumains, which desired of the damosell Linet that hee might see her sister his lady. Then sir Beaumains armed him at all points and rode straight

¹ *Borrowes.*—Pledges; sureties.

to the castle. And when hee came to the gate, hee found there many men armed, that pulled up the drawbridge and drew the port close. And then he looked up to the window, and there he saw the faire lady dame Lioness, that said on high : 'Goe thy way, sir Beaumains, for as yet thou shalt not wholly have my love, untill the time thou bee called one of the number of the worthy knights; and therefore goe and labour in armes worshipfully these twelve-moneths, and then ye shall heare new tidings.' 'Alas, faire lady,' said sir Beaumains, 'I have not deserved this, that ye should shew to mee this strangenesse; I have deserved thankes and kindnesse, and well I am sure that I have bought your love with part of the best blood within my body.' 'Faire knight,' said dame Lioness, 'bee not displeased, nor over hastie, for wit ye wel that I consider your great travaile and labour, your bountie and your goodnesse, as I ought to doe; and *perd¹* a twelve-moneth will be soone gone, and trust you me, faire knight, I shall be true unto you, and shall never betray you, but unto my death I shall love you and none other.' And therewithall shee turned her from the window. And sir Beaumains rode away from the castle, and wist not whether he rode, till it was darke night; and then it happened him to come to a poore mans house, and there hee was harboured all that night. And so on the morrow hee rode till it was noone; and then hee came unto a broad water, and thereby was a great lodge, and there hee alighted to sleepe, and laid his head upon his shield, and betooke his horse to the dwarfe, and commanded him to watch. Now turne we to the lady of the castle, that thought much upon sir Beaumains; and then she called unto her sir Gringamor her brother, and prayed him in all manner, as he loved her heartily, that hee would ride after sir Beaumains, 'and ever have him in a waite² till that ye may finde him sleeping, and, in the priviest wise that yee can, take his dwarfe from him, and goe your way with him as fast as ever ye may or sir Beaumains awake; for my sister Linet hath shewed me that the dwarfe can tell of what kindred hee is come, and what his right name is; and in the meane while I and my sister will ride to your castle to awaite when yee shall bring with you this dwarfe.' 'Sister,' said sir Gringamor, 'all this shall be done as yee have desired.' And so he departed, and rod both day and night till that hee had found sir Beaumains lying sleeping by a water side, and had laid his head upon his shield. And then when hee saw that sir Beaumains was fast on sleepe, hee came stilly stalking behind the dwarfe, and tooke him fast under his arme, and so rode away

¹ *Perd^é*.—Literally, by God, for God's sake. A common Anglo-Norman exclamation.

² *In a waite*.—Caxton has, *ever have ye wayte upon hym*. Either reading means, keep ever watch upon him.

with him as fast as ever hee might unto his castle. And this sir Gringamors armour, and all that to him belonged, was all blacke. And therewithal sir Beaumains awoke, and up hee leapt lightly, and saw where sir Gringamor rode his way with the dwarfe, and so sir Gringamor rode out of his sight.

CHAP. CXXXV.—*How sir Beaumains rode after for to rescew his dwarfe, and came into the castle where he was.*

THEN sir Beaumains rode after him all that ever hee might ride; and at the last it hapned him to come to a faire greene way, and there he met with a poore man of the countrie, whom hee saluted, and asked him whether hee met not with a knight upon a blacke horse and blacke harneis, and a little dwarfe sitting behind him with heavie cheere. 'Sir,' said the poore man, 'heere passed by mee a knight that is called sir Gringamor, with such a dwarfe mourning as yee say, but I counsell you that ye follow him not, for he is one of the perilous knights of the world.'

Leave wee now to speake of Beaumains, and speake we of sir Gringamor and of the dwarfe. Anon as the dwarfe was come to the castle, then dame Liones and dame Linet her sister asked the dwarfe where his master was borne, and of what linage that he was come. 'As for that,' said the dwarfe, 'I feare not greatly to tell his name, and of what kinne that he is come. Wit yee well that hee is a kings sonne, and his mother is sister unto king Arthur, and hee is brother unto the good knight sir Gawaine, and his name is sir Gareth of Orkeney. Now have I told you his right name, now I pray you, faire lady, let mee goe againe unto my lord, for he will never out of this countrey till he have me againe.' 'As for that,' said sir Gringamor, 'be it as it may, we will goe to our dinner.' And so they washed, and went to meat, and made them merry, and were well at ease, and, because the lady dame Liones of the castle was there, they made great joy.

Then came sir Beaumains at the gate with an angry countenance, and cried aloud that all the castle might heare it, saying: 'Thou traitour, sir Gringamor, deliver mee my dwarfe againe.' Then sir Gringamor looked out at a window, and said: 'Sir Gareth of Orkney, leave thy boasting words, for thou getest not thy dwarfe againe.' 'Ah, faire brother,' said dame Liones, 'I would hee had his dwarfe againe, now hee hath told mee all my desire. And also, brother, hee hath done much for mee, and delivered me from the red knight of the red launds; and wit ye well I love him above all other knights, and full faine would I speake with him, but in no wise I would hee wist what I were, but that I were another strange lady.' 'Well,' said sir Gringamor, 'sith that I know your will, I will

now obey unto him.' And therewithall hee went downe unto sir Gareth, and said: 'Sir, I cry you mercy, I pray you that you will alight, and take such cheere as I can make you here in this castle.' 'Shall I then have my dwarfe againe?' said sir Gareth. 'Yea, sir, and all the pleasure that I can make you, for as soone as your dwarfe told me what yee were and of what blood that yee are come, and what noble deeds ye have done in these marches, then I repented me of my deeds.' And then sir Gareth alighted downe from his horse, and therewith came his dwarfe and tooke his horse. And so sir Gringamor tooke him by the hand, and led him into the hall, and there was sir Gringamors wife.

CHAP. CXXXVI.—*How sir Gareth, otherwise called sir Beaumains, came unto the presence of his lady, and how they tooke acquaintance, and of their love.*

AND then there came forth into the hall dame Lyones arrayed like a princesse. And they had goodly language and lovely countenance¹ together. And sir Gareth many times thought in himselfe, 'Jesu! would to God that the lady of the castle perillous were so faire as shee is.' There were all manner of games and playes, both of dauncing and leaping; and ever the more sir Gareth beheld the lady, the more hee loved her. And forth toward night they went to supper. All these lookes sir Gringamor espied, and after supper hee went unto sir Gareth, and said: 'Sir, make ye good cheere, for yee shall have none other cause, for this lady my sister loveth you as well as yee doe her, and better, if better may bee.' 'And I wist that,' said sir Gareth, 'there should not live a gladder man then I would bee.' 'Upon my worship,' said sir Gringamor, 'trust to my promise, and as long as it liketh you yee shall sojourne with mee, and this lady shall be with us to make you all the cheere that shee can.' And then the noble knight sir Gareth went to the dame Lyones, which hee then much loved, and kissed her many times, and either made great joy of other. And there shee promised him her love, faithfully to love him, and never none other, all the dayes of her life.

And then the lady dame Lyones, by the assent of her brother, told sir Gareth all the truth what shee was, and how she was the same lady that he did battaile for, and how that shee was lady of the castle perillous; and there shee told him how shee caused her brother to take away his dwarfe.

¹ *Countenance*.—i. e. behaviour.

CHAP. CXXXVII.—*How in the night came in an armed knight and fought with sir Gareth, and hurt him sore in the thigh, and how sir Gareth smote off the knights head.*

‘FOR this cause, to know the certaintie what was your name, and of what kinne yee were come.’ And then shee let fetch before him the damosell Lynet, which had ridden with him many wilsome¹ wayes. And then they plight their troth unto each other to love, and never to faile whiles their lives lasted. And so after supper was made cleane avoydance that every lord and lady should goe to his rest. But sir Gareth said plainly that he would goe no further than the hall, for such places, said hee, was convenient for an arraunt knight to take his rest in. And so there were ordeined great couches, and thereon feather beds, and there he laid him downe to sleepe. And then he saw comming toward him an armed knight, with a great light about him; and a long gisarme² in his hand, and made a grim countenance to smite him. Then sir Gareth leapt out of his bed, and gat his sword, and went straight toward the knight. And when the knight saw sir Gareth come so fiercely upon him, he smote him with a foyne through the thicke of the thigh, that the same wound was a shaftmon³ broad, and had cut atwo many veines and sinewes. And therewith sir Gareth smote him upon the helme such a buffet that he fell groveling to the earth, and then sir Gareth lept over him and unlaced his helme, and quickly smote off his head. And then he bled so fast that hee might not stand upon his feete, but laid him down upon his bed, and there he swoned, and lay as hee had beene dead. And then sir Gringamor came downe, and when he saw that sir Gareth was so shamefully wounded, he was sore displeased, and said, ‘I am ashamed that this noble knight is thus dishonoured.’ And great sorrow made sir Gringamor and dame Lyones. And forthwith came dame Linet, and tooke up the head of the dead knight in the sight of them all, and anointed it with an oyntment there as it was smitten off, and in the same wise shee did to that other part there as the head stood, and then shee set it together, and it was as fast as ever it was afore; and the same knight arose lightly, and the damosell Lynet led him away with her. All this saw sir Gringamor and dame Lyones, and so did sir Gareth, and well hee espied that it was the damosell Lynet which rode with him through the perillous passages. ‘Ah, well, damosell,’ said sir Gareth, ‘I wend yee would not have done as ye have done.’ ‘My lord Gareth,’ said the damosell Lynet, ‘all that I have done shall bee for your honour and worship, and also to us all.’ And so within

¹ *Wilsome*, equal to the distance from the extremity of the thumb to that of the palm in the extended hand—reckoned at about half a foot.

a while sir Gareth was nigh whole : and because he was wounded afore, he laid his armour and his sword nigh his bed side.

CHAP. CXXXVIII.—*How the same knight came againe the next night, and was beheaded againe. And how at the feast of Pentecost all the knights that sir Gareth had overcome came and yelded them unto king Arthur.*

THE tenth night after the wound in his thigh sir Gareth had no sooner gone to his bed but he espied an armed knight coming across the hall ; and lightly sir Gareth armed himself ; and then they hurled together with great ire and malice all about the hall, and there was great light, as it had beene to the number of twentie torches both before and behind, so that sir Gareth strained so himselfe, that his old wounds brast out againe in bleeding, but hee was hot and couragious and tooke no care, but he struke downe that knight, and voyded his helme, and strake off his head. Then he hewed the head in an hundred peeces, and when he had done so, hee tooke up all those peeces, and threw them out at a window into the diches of the castle ; and when hee had thus done, hee was so faint that he could not stand for bleeding.

And when hee was almost unarmed, hee fell in a deadly sound¹ in the floore. And then sir Gringamor came and found sir Gareth in that plite ; and there he awaked sir Gareth, and gave him a drinke that releevd him wondrously well. Right so came the damosell Lynet before them all, and shee had fetched all the little gobbets² of the head that sir Gareth had throwen out at the window, and there shee anointed them as shee had done before, and set them together againe. ‘Well, damosell Lynet,’ said sir Gareth, ‘I have not deserved all this despite which yee doe to mee.’ ‘Sir knight,’ said the damosell Lynet, ‘I have nothing done but shall bee for your worship and for us all.’ And then was sir Gareth stanchd of his bleeding. But the leechés³ said that there was no man on live that should heale him throughout of his wound, but if they healed him that caused that strooke by enchauntment.

Now leave we off sir Gareth ther with sir Gringamor and his sisters, and returne wee unto king Arthur, that at the next feast of Pentecost held his feast, and there came the greene knight with fiftie knights, and the red knight with three score knights, and the blew knight with an hundred knights, and they all yelded them unto king Arthur. These three brethren told king Arthur how they were overcome by a knight that a damosell had with her, and called him sir Beaumains.

¹ Sound.—i. e. swoon.

² Gobbets.—Pieces.

³ Leeches.—Physicians.

* Right as king Arthur stood so talking with these three brethren, there came sir Launcelot du Lake, and told the king that there was come a goodly lord with five hundred knights. Then the king went out of Carlion, and there came to him this lord, which saluted the king in a good manner. 'What is your will?' said king Arthur; 'and what is your errand?' 'Sir,' said hee, 'I am called the red knight of the red launds, but my name is sir Ironside; and, sir, yee shall wit that heere I am sent to you of a knight which is called sir Beaumains, for he wanne mee in plaine battaile, and hee charged and commanded mee to yeeld mee unto your grace and will.' 'Jesu, mercy!' said king Arthur, 'I am much beholding unto that knight, that hath so put his body in devoure¹ to worship mee and my court. Ironside, that art called the red knight of the red launds, thou art called a precious² knight, if thou wilt hold of me I shall make thee knight of the round table, but then thou maiest bee no more a murtherer.' 'Sir, as to that I have promised unto sir Beaumains never to use such a custome; for I did it at the request of a lady that I loved, and I must goe unto sir Launcelot and unto sir Gawaine, and aske them forgiveness of the evill will that I had unto them.' 'They be heere now afore thee,' said the king, 'ye may say unto them what yee will.' And then hee kneeled downe to sir Lancelot and to sir Gawaine, and prayed them of forgiveness of the evill will and enmitie that he had committed against them both.

CHAP. CXXXIX.—*How sir Launcelot and sir Gawaine pardoned him, and demaunded him where sir Gareth was.*

THEN goodly they said all at once, 'God forgive you and wee doe, and pray you that yee will tell us where wee may finde sir Beaumains.' 'Faire lord,' said sir Ironside, 'I can not tell you, for all such young knights as hee is, when they bee in their adventures, bee never abiding in one place.' 'Well, my faire lords,' said king Arthur, 'wit you well I shall doe you honour for the love of sir Beaumains, and as soone as ever I meete with him I shall make you all upon one day knights of the table round. But I marvaile that I heare not of the blacke knight your brother, hee was a full noble knight.' 'Sir,' said Pertolope the greene knight, 'sir Beaumains slew him in an encounter with his speare, his name is sir Pereard.' 'That was great pittie,' said king Arthur, and so said many knights moe. For these foure brethren were full well knownen for noble knights in king Arthurs court, for long time they had holden warre against the knights of the table round.

¹ *Devoure.*—Duty.

² *Precious.*—*Peryllous*, Caxton.

CHAP. CXL.—*How the queene of Orkeney came to this feast of Penitēcost, and how sir Gawaine and his brethren came to aske her blessing.*

SO then the king and they went to their meate; and as they sat at their meate, there came in the queene of Orkeney, with a great number of ladies and knights. And then sir Gawaine and sir Agravaine and sir Gaheris arose and went to her, and saluted her upon their knees, and asked her blessing, for in the space of fiftene yeares they had not seene her. Then shee spake on high to her brother king Arthur, 'Where have yee done my young son sir Gareth? hee was heere among you a twelve-moneth, and yee made a kitchin knave of him, which is a great shame to you all.' 'Oh, deare mother,' said sir Gawaine, 'I knew him not.' 'Nor I,' said the king, 'which me now sore repenteth, but God be thanked he is proved a worshipful knight as any is now living of his yeares, and I shall never bee glad till I may find him.' 'Ah, brother,' said the queene of Orkeney, 'yee did your selfe a great shame when ye among you kept my sonne Gareth in the kitchin and fed him like a poore hogge.' 'Faire sister,' said king Arthur, 'yee shall right well wit that I knew him not, no more did sir Gawaine nor his brethren. Also, sister, mee seemeth yee might have done mee to wit of his comming, and then if I had not done well to him, yee might have blamed mee. For when he came to this court he asked mee three gifts, and one hee asked that same day, that was, that I would give him meate enough for twelve moneths.

'And the other two gifts hee asked that same day twelve-moneths after, and that was that he might have the adventure of the damosell Linet; and the third was, that sir Launcelot should make him knight when he desired him; and so I graunted him all his desire. And many in this court marvailed that he desired his sustenance for twelve moneths, and therefore we deemed many of us that he was not come of a noble house.'

'Brother,' said the queene, 'all that ye say I beleeve; but I marvaile that sir Kay did mock and scorne him, and gave him that name Beaumains; yet sir Kay named him more righteously than hee wend, for I dare well say, and hee be on live, hee is a faire handed man, and well disposed as any is living.' Then said king Arthur, 'Let this language bee still, and by the grace of God hee shall be found and he be within this seven realmes.'

CHAP. CXLI.—*How king Arthur sent for the lady Lioness, and how shee let crie a turnement at the castle, where as came many good knights.*

THEN said sir Gawaine and his brethren unto king Arthur: 'Sir, and yee will give us leave, wee will goe seeke our brother.' 'Nay,' said sir Launcelot, 'that shall not neede,' and

so said sir Bawdewaine of Brittain, 'for as by our advise the king shall send unto dame Lioness, and pray her that she will come to the king's court in all the haste that she may, and then she may give you the best counsaile where as yee shall find him.' 'This is well said of you,' quoth king Arthur. So then goodly letters were made, and in all haste a messenger was sent forth, that rode both night and day till he came to the castle perilous. And then the lady dame Lioness was sent for: and when she understood this message, shee bad the messenger to ride on his way unto king Arthur, and she would come after in all the haste possible. Then when shee came to sir Gringamor and sir Gareth, she told them all how king Arthur had sent for her. 'That is because of me,' said sir Gareth. 'Now advise me,' said dame Lioness, 'what shall I say.' 'My lady and my love,' said sir Gareth, 'I pray you in no manner of wise be yee knowen where I am, but well I wot my mother is there and all my brethren, and they will take upon them to seeke me, as I wot well they doe. But advise my lord the king, when hee questioneth with you of me, and let this be your advise: that and it like his good grace ye will make a crie against the feast of the Assumption of our Lady, that what knight there proveth him best, hee shall weld you and all your lands. And if it so be that hee be a wedded man, that his wife shall have the degree and a coronall of gold, beset with stones of vertue to the value of a thousand pound, and a white jarfawcon¹.' Then dame Lioness departed and came unto king Arthur, where she was nobly received, and there she was sore questioned of king Arthur and of the queen of Orkeney; and she answered, wheresoever sir Gareth was, she could not tell. But thus much shee said to king Arthur: 'Sir, I will let crie a turnement, that shall be done before my castle at the Assumption of our Lady, and the crie shall be thus, that you, my lord Arthur, shall be there and your knights, and I will purvey that my knights shall be against yours, and then I am sure yee shall heare of sir Gareth.' 'This is well advised,' said king Arthur. And so shee departed from thence. And then the king and shee made great provision for the tournament. When dame Lioness was come to the ile of Avilion², which was the same ile where as her brother sir Gringamor dwelled, and then shee told him all how she had done, and what promise shee had made to king Arthur. 'Alas!' said sir Gareth, 'I have bene so sore wounded with unhappinesse sithen I came into this castle, that I shall not be able to doe at that turnament like as a knight should doe, for I was never well whole since I was hurt.' 'Bee yee of good cheare,' said the damosell Lynet, 'for I undertake within these fiftene dayes for to make you as whole and as lusty as ever yee

¹ *Jarfawcon*.—See before, p. 132.

² *Avilion*.—Avallon, or Glastonbury.

were. Send you unto sir Persaunt of Inde, and command him and his knights to be heere with you as they have promised. Also, that yee send unto sir Ironside, that is the red knight of the red launds, and charge him that he bee ready with you with all his company of knights, and then shall yee be able to match with king Arthur and his knights.' So this was done, and all the knights were sent for unto the castle perillous. And so the cry was made in all England, Wales, and Scotland, Ireland, and Cornewaile, and in all the out yles, and in Brittain, and in many other countries, that at the feast of the Assumption of our Lady next comming, men should come to the castle perillous, beside the ile of Avilion, and there all the knights that came should have the choyse whether them list to be on the one part with the knights of the castle, or on the other part with king Arthur. And two moneths was to the day that the turnament should bee. And so there came many good knights that were at large, and held them for the most part against king Arthur and his knights of the round table, and came on the side of them of the castle. For sir Epinogris was the first, and he was the kings son of Northumberland, and sir Palamides the Sarasin, and sir Safere, and sir Sagwarides his brothers, but they were christened, and sir Malagrine, and sir Brian de les Iles, a noble knight, and sir Grummore Grummorsum, a good knight of Scotland, and sir Carados of the dolorous tower, and sir Turquine his brother, and sir Arnold and sir Gauter two brethren, good knights of Cornewaile; there came sir Tristram de Liones, and with him sir Dinadan, the seneshall, and sir Sadoke, but sir Tristram at that time was not knight of the round table, but he was one of the best knights of the world. And so all these noble knights accompanied them, with the lady of the castle, and with the red knight of the red launds; but as for sir Gareth he would take upon him no more but as other meane knights did.

CHAP. CXLII.—*How king Arthur went to the turnement with his knights, and how the lady dame Liones received him worshipfully, and how the knights encountred together.*

AND then there came with king Arthur sir Gawaine and his two brethren sir Agravaine and sir Gaheris; and then his nephewes sir Ewaine le Blaunche-Mains, and sir Aglovale, sir Tor, sir Percivale de Galis, and sir Lamorake de Galis. Then came sir Launcelot du Lake with his brethren, nephewes, and cosins, and sir Dinadam, sir La-cote-male-taile his brother, a noble knight, and also sir Sagramore, a good knight, and the most part of the round table.

Also there came with king Arthur these knights, the King of Ireland king Aguisaunce, and the king of Scotland king Carados, and king Urience of the land of Gore, and king Bagdemagus

and his son sir Meliganus, and sir Galahault the noble prince. Now leave wee to speake of these kings and knights, and let us speake of the great array that was made within the castle and about the castle for both parties. The lady dame Liones ordained great array on her part for her noble knights, for all manner of lodging and vittaile that came by land and by water. And then there came the herbegeours¹ from king Arthur, for to harborow him and his knights. Then dame Liones said unto sir Gareth, 'Sir, I will leave² you a ring, but I would pray you as yee love mee heartily let mee have it againe when the turnement is done. And this is the vertue of my ring, that is greene it will turne it unto red, and that is red it will turne into likenesse of greene, and that is blew it will turne to likenesse of white, and that is white it will turne to likenesse of blew, and so it wil doe of all manner of colours. Also who that beareth my ring shall leese no blood, and for great love I will give you this ring.' 'Gramercy,' said sir Gareth, 'mine owne lady, for this ring is passing meete for me, for it will turne all maner of likenesse that I am in, and that shal cause me that I shal not be knowen.' And so thus every knight made him ready unto that turnement. And king Arthur was come two dayes before the Assumption of our Lady: and there came queene Guenever, and the queene of Orkeney. And on the day of the Assumption, when masse and mattins was done, there were heraulds with trumpets commanded to blow unto the field. And so anon there came out sir Epinogris, the kings sonne of Northumberland, from the castle, and there encountred with him sir Sagramore le Desirous, and either of them brake their speares to their hands. And then came in sir Palomides out of the castle, and there encountred with him sir Gawaine, and either of them smot other so hard that both the good knights and their horses fell to the earth. And then the knights of either part resceded their knights.

CHAP. CXLIII.—*How the knights bare them in the battaile.*

THEN came in the red knight of the red launds and sir Gareth from the castle, and there encountred with them two sir Bors de Ganis and sir Bleoberis, and there the red knight and sir Bors smote each other so hard that their speares burst and their horses fell groveling to the earth. Then sir Bleoberis³ brake his speare upon sir Gareth, but of that great strooke sir Bleoberis fell to the ground. When sir Galihodin saw that, hee bad sir Gareth keepe him, and sir Gareth smote him to the earth. Then sir Galihud gat a

¹ *Herbegeours*.—Harbingers; officers sent before the court to prepare lodgings.

² *Leave*.—Caxton has more correctly *lene*, i.e. lend.

³ *Sir Bleoberis*.—*Syr Blamor*, Caxton.

speare to avenge his brother, and in the same wise sir Gareth served him. And sir Dinadan and his brother La-cote-male-taile, and sir Sagramore le Desirous, and Dodinas le Savage, al these he bare downe with one speare. When king Aug-wisaunce of Ireland saw sir Gareth fare so, hee marvelled what he might bee, that one time seemed greene, and another time at his againe-comming hee seemed blew; and thus at every course that hee rode too and fro, hee changed his colour, so that there might neither king nor knight have cognisance nor knowledge of him. Then king Augwisaunce of Ireland encountered with sir Gareth, and there sir Gareth smote him from his horse, saddle and all. And then came king Carados of Scotland, and sir Gareth smote him downe horse and man. And in the same wise he served king Urience of the land of Gore. And then there came in king Bagdemagus, and sir Gareth smote him downe horse and man to the ground. And king Bagdemagus sonne Meliaganus brake a speare upon sir Gareth mightily and knightly. And then sir Galahaut, the noble prince, cryed on high: 'Knight with the many colours, wel hast thou justed, now make thee ready that I may just with thee.' When sir Gareth heard that, he gate him a great speare, and so they encountred together, and there the prince brake his speare, but sir Gareth smote him on the left side on the helme that he reeled here and there, and he had fallen downe had not his men recovered him. 'So God mee helpe,' said king Arthur, 'that knight with the many colours is a good knight;' wherefore the king called unto him sir Lancelot du Lake, and prayed him to encounter with that knight. 'Sir,' said sir Launcelot, 'I may well finde in heart to forbear him as at this time, for he hath had travaile inough this day; and when a good knight doth so well some day, it is no good knights part to let him of his worship, and as for me, this day he shall have the honour; though it lay in my power to put him from it, yet would I not doe it.'

Then when this was done, there was drawing of swords, and there began a great turnament; and there did sir Lancelot mervailous deeds of armes. And betweene sir Lamoracke and sir Ironside, that was the red knight of the red launds, there was a strong battaile; and betweene sir Palomides and sir Bleoberis was a stronge battaile; and sir Gawaine and sir Tristram met together, and there sir Gawaine had the worst, for he pulled sir Gawaine from his horse, and there he was long on foote and defouled. Then came sir Lancelot, and hee smote sir Turquine, and hee him againe, and then there came sir Carados his brother, and both at once they assailed him; and hee as the most noblest knight of the world right worshipfully fought with them both, that all men wondred of the noblenesse of sir Lancelot du Lake that fought with those two

perilous knights. [And then came in sir Gareth, and knewe that it was sir Lancelot that fought with the two perillous knights]¹, and then sir Gareth came with his good horse, and put them asunder, and no stroke would hee smite to sir Lancelot du Lake. That espied sir Lancelot, which deemed it should bee the good knight sir Gareth, and then sir Gareth rode here and there and smote on the right hand and on the left hand, that all the folke might well espie where he rode; and by fortune he met with his brother sir Gawaine, and there he put sir Gawaine to the worst, and so hee served five or sixe knights of the round table. Then when sir Tristram beheld him how he first justed and after fought so well with a sword, then he rode unto sir Ironside and unto sir Persaunt of Inde, and asked them by their faith, 'What maner of knight is yonder knight which seemeth in so many divers colours? Truly me seemeth, that hee putteth himselfe in great paine, for hee never ceaseth.' 'Know ye not what he is?' said sir Ironside. 'What is his name?' said sir Tristram; 'and of what blood is he come?' 'Hee was called in king Arthurs court "Beaumains," but his name is sir Gareth of Orkeney, brother unto sir Gawaine.' 'By my head,' said sir Tristram, 'hee is a good knight and a big man of armes, and if he bee young he shall prove a full noble knight.' 'Hee is but a child,' said they all; 'and of sir Lancelot hee was made knight.' 'Therefore hee is much the better,' said sir Tristram. And then sir Tristram, sir Ironside, sir Persaunt, and his brother rode together for to helpe sir Gareth, and then there were given many strong strookes. And then sir Gareth rode out on the one side to amend his helme, and then said his dwarfe, 'Take me your ring that yee lose it not while ye drinke.' And so when hee had drunke, he put out his helme againe, and egerly tooke his horse and rode into the field, and left his ring with his dwarfe, and the dwarfe was glad that the ring was from him, for then hee wist well hee should be knowne. And then when sir Gareth was in the field, all the people saw him well and plainly that he was in yellow colours, and there he rashed off helmes and pulled downe knights, that king Arthur had mervaille what knight hee was, for the king saw by his haire that it was the same knight.

CHAP. CXLIV.—*How sir Gareth was espied by the heraulds, and how he escaped out of the field.*

'NOW goe,' said king Arthur unto divers heraulds, 'and ride about him and espie what maner of knight he is, for I have asked of many knights this day that bee of the partie, and all say they know him not.' And so an herauld rod as

¹ The passage within brackets is supplied from Caxton's text.

nigh sir Gareth as he could, and there hee saw written about the helme in gold, 'This is sir Gareth of Orkeney.' Then the herauld cryed, 'This is sir Gareth of Orkeney, king Lots son.' And when sir Gareth espied that hee was discovered, then hee began to double his strooks, and smote downe sir Sagramor and his brother sir Gawaine. 'Oh, brother,' said sir Gawaine, 'I wend yee would not have stricken mee.' And when sir Gareth heard him say so, hee threw here and there, and with paine hee gat out of the presse, and then he met with his dwarfe. 'Oh, boy,' said sir Gareth, 'thou hast beguiled mee foully this day that thou kept my ring; give it mee anon againe that I may hide my body withall.' And so hee tooke it him, and then they all wist not where he was become, and sir Gawaine had espied where sir Gareth rode; and then he rode after with all his might. And when sir Gareth wist that sir Gawaine his brother was past, he asked the dwarfe of his best counsell. 'Sir,' said the dwarfe, 'me seemeth it were best now that yee are escaped from spying, that yee send my lady dame Lyones her ring.' 'That is well advised,' said sir Gareth; 'now have it here, and beare it to her, and say that I commend mee unto her good grace.' And so hee rode his way, and did his errand unto the lady. And so lightly the dwarfe came againe unto sir Gareth, that would faine have had a lodging, for hee had neede to rest him. And then fell there a thunder and raine as heaven and earth should have gone together, and sir Gareth was not a little weary, for of all that day hee had but little rest, as well his horse as himselfe. At the last by fortune hee came to a castle, and there he heard the waites¹ on the wals.

CHAP. CXLV.—*How sir Gareth came unto a castle, where he was well lodged, and how he justed with a knight, and how he slew him.*

THEN sir Gareth rode straight unto the barbican of the castle, and prayed the porter faire for to let him into the castle. Then the porter went unto the duchesse, and told her how there was a knight of king Arthurs that would have harbour. And then the duchesse went up unto a towre over the gate with great torch light. When sir Gareth saw the torch light, hee cryed all on high, 'Whether thou be lord or lady, gyant or champion, I take no force, so that I may have harbore for this night, and if it be so that I must needs fight, spare me not to morow when I have rested mee, for both I and my horse are weary.' 'Sir knight,' said the duchesse, 'thou speakest mightily and boldly, but wit thou well that the lord of this castle loveth not king Arthur nor none of his court; and if thou come in this night, thou must come in under

¹ *Waites.*—Watchmen.

this manner and forme that wheresoeuer thou meete my lord thou must yeeld thee unto him as prisoner.' 'Madame,' said sir Gareth, 'what is your lord, and what is his name?' 'Sir, my lords name is duke de la Rowse.' 'Well, madam,' said sir Gareth, 'I shall promise you that in what place I meete your lord, I shall yeeld me unto his good grace, or will release my selfe and I can with my speare and with my sword.' 'Yee say right well,' said the duchesse; and then shee let the draw-bridge downe. And so he rode into the hall, and there he alighted, and his horse was led into a stable, and in the hall hee unarmed him, and said: 'Madame, I will not out of thy hall this night, and when it is daylight, let see who will have adoe with mee, he shall finde mee lightly ready.' And shortly when that he had supped, his bed was made there, so he rested him all night. And on the morrow he heard masse, and brake his fast, and tooke his leave of the duchesse and of them all, and thanked her goodly of her lodging and of her good cheere. And then shee asked him his name. 'Madame,' said hee, 'truely my name is sir Gareth of Orkeney, and some men call me Beaumains.' And then sir Gareth departed, and rode up unto a mountaine, and there met him a knight, his name was sir Bendelaine, and hee said to sir Gareth: 'Thou shalt not passe this way, for either thou shalt just with me, or be my prisoner.' 'Then will I just with thee,' said sir Gareth. And so they let their horses runne, and there sir Gareth smote him throughout the body, and then sir Bendelaine rode forth unto his castle there beside, and there dyed. So sir Gareth would faine have rested him, and he came riding unto sir Bendelaines castle, and then his knights and his servants espied that it was hee that had slaine their lord; then they armed twentie good men, and came out and assailed sir Gareth, and he had no speare but onely his sword, and put his shield afore him, and there they all brake their speares upon him, and they assailed him passing sore; but ever sir Gareth defended him like a noble knight.

CHAP. CXLVI.—*How sir Gareth fought with a knight that held within his castle thirtie ladies, and how he slew him.*

SO when they saw that they might not overcome him, they rode from him, and with speares they slew his horse, and then they assailed him full hard; but he slew them one and one till they were but foure, and then they fled; and sir Gareth tooke a good horse which was one of theirs, and rod his way. Then hee rode a great pace till that he came to a castle, and there came by him a page. 'Sir knight,' said the page, 'here be within this castle thirtie ladyes, and all they bee widowes, for here is the perilloust knight that now liveth.' And then

the page saw where as the browne knight came. 'Loe,' said the page, 'yonder is he comming.' 'Let me deale with him,' said sir Gareth. And when either of other had a sight, they let their horses runne, and sir Gareth overthrew the browne knight to the ground starke dead. So sir Gareth rode into the castle, and prayed the ladies that he might rest him there. 'Make him good cheere,' said the page, 'for this knight hath slaine your enemy.' Then they all made him good cheere as lay in their power. And so on the morrow hee went to masse, and there he saw the thirtie ladies kneele and lay groveling upon divers tombes making great mone and sorrow. Then sir Gareth wist well that in the tombes lay their lords. Then said sir Gareth: 'Faire ladies, yee must at the next feast of Pentecost be at the court of king Arthur, and say that I, sir Gareth, sent you unto him.' 'Wee shall doe your command,' said the ladies. So he departed; and by fortune he came to a mountaine, and there he found a goodly knight which said: 'Abide, sir knight, and just with me.' 'What be yee?' said sir Gareth. 'My name is,' said he, 'the duke de la Rowse.' 'Ah, sir, yee are the same knight that I lodged once in your castle, and there I made promise unto your lady that I should yeeld me unto you.' 'Ah,' said the duke, 'art thou the same proud knight that proffered to fight with my knights? therefore make thee ready, for I will have adoe with thee.' So they did together a great battaile that lasted more then an houre, and either hurt other full sore. At the last sir Gareth gate the duke to the earth, and would have slaine him, and then he yeelded him to him. 'Then must ye goe,' said sir Gareth, 'unto my lord king Arthur at the next feast of Pentecost, and say that I, sir Gareth of Orkeney, sent you unto him.' 'It shall be done,' said the duke, 'and I shall doe to you homage and fealtie with an hundred knights with mee, and all the daies of my life to doe you service where ye will command me.'

CHAP. CXLVII.—*How sir Gawaine and sir Gareth fought each against other, and how they knew each other by the damosell Linet.*

SO the duke departed, and sir Gareth stood there alone, and there he saw an armed knight comming toward him. Then sir Gareth tooke the dukes shield, and mounted on horseback, and so without biding they ran together as it had been thunder; and so they fought two houres. At the last there came the damosell Linet, that some men call the damosell savage¹, and shee came riding upon an ambling mule, and there shee cried all on high, 'Sir Gawaine, sir Gawaine, leave thy fighting with thy brother sir Gareth.' And when he heard her say so, he threw away his shield and his sword, and ran

¹ *The damosell savage.*—i. e. the wild damsel.

to sir Gareth and tooke him in his armes, and after kneeled downe and asked him mercie. 'What are yee,' said sir Gareth, 'that right now were so strong and so mighty, and now so suddenly yeeld you unto me?' 'Oh, sir Gareth, I am your brother sir Gawaine, that for your sake have had great sorrow and labour.' Then sir Gareth unlaced his helme, and kneeled downe to him, and asked him mercy. Then they arose both and embraced each other in their armes, and wept a great while or they might speak, and either of them gave other the prise of the battaile. And there was many a kind word betweene them both. 'Alas! my faire brother,' said sir Gawaine, 'perde, I ought of right to worship you and yce were not my brother, for ye have worshiped king Arthur and al his court, for ye have sent him more worshipfull knights these twelve-moneths then six of the best of the round table have done, except sir Launcelot.' 'Now what will ye doe?' said the damosell savage, 'me seemeth it were wel done that king Arthur had knowledge of you both, for your horses are so bruised that they may not bear you.' 'Now, faire damosel,' said sir Gawaine, 'I pray you to ride unto my lord mine uncle king Arthur, and tell him what adventure is befallen to mee heere, and I suppose he will not tarry long.' Then she tooke her mule, and lightly came unto king Arthur, that was but two mile thence. So when the king came there as they were, he saw sir Gawaine and sir Gareth sit upon a little hills side, and then the king avoided his horse. And when he came nigh sir Gareth, hee would have spoken but might not, and therewith hee sunke downe in a sound for gladnesse. And so they start unto their uncle, requiring him of his good grace to be of good comfort. Then the king commanded that all manner of knights that were under his obeysance should make their lodging there for the love of his nephews; and so was it done, and all manner of purviance purvaied, that there lacked nothing that might bee gotten of tame ne wild for gold or for silver. And then by the meanes of the damosell savage, sir Gawaine and sir Gareth were healed of their wounds, and there they sojourned eight dayes. Then said king Arthur unto the damosell savage: 'I marvaile that your sister dame Liones commeth not to visit her knight my nephew sir Gareth, that hath had so much travaile for her love.' 'My lord,' said the damosel Linet, 'ye must of your good grace hold her excused, for shee knoweth not that my lord sir Gareth is heere.' 'Then goe for her,' said king Arthur, 'that we may bee appointed what is best to be done, according unto the pleasure of my nephew sir Gareth.' 'Sir,' said the damosell Linet, 'that shall be done;' and so she rode unto her sister. And as lightly as shee might make her ready shee did, and came on the morrow with her brother sir Gringamor, and with her fortie knights.

CHAP. CXLVIII.—*How sir Gareth acknowledged that they loved each other to king Arthur, and of the day of their wedding.*

AMONG all these ladies was shee named the fairest and peerlesse. Then came king Arthur and many other kings, and queene Guenever and the queene of Orkeney; and there the king asked his nephew sir Gareth whether hee would have the lady to his wife. 'My lord, wit you well that I love her above all ladies living.' 'Now faire lady,' said king Arthur unto her, 'what say yee?' 'Most noble king,' said dame Lyones, 'wit you well that my lord sir Gareth is to mee more lever to have and weld¹ as my husband, then any king or prince christened, and if I may not have him, I promise you I will never have none.' 'What, nephew,' said the king, 'is the wind in that doore? I wit yee well yee can not love so well but I shall rather increase it then distresse.' And the same wise said sir Gareths mother. Then was there made a provision for the day of marriage, and by the kings advise it was provided that it should be at Michaelmasse next following at Kinkenadon by the seaside, for there is a plentifull cuntry. And so it was cryed in all places through the realme. And then sir Gareth sent his messengers unto all those knights and ladies that he had wone in battaile before, that they should be at the day of his marriage at Kinkenadon by the sands. The great cheere that sir Launcelot du Lake made for sir Gareth of Orkeney it was mervaile to see, and he of him againe, for there was never no knight that sir Gareth loved so well as he did sir Lancelot du Lake, and ever for the most part would be in sir Lancelots company; for after sir Gareth had espied sir Gawains conditions, he withdrew himselfe from his brother sir Gawains fellowship, for he was vengeable and unmercifull, and whereas he hated he would be avenged with murther and treason, and that hated sir Gareth.

CHAP. CXLIX.—*Of the great royaltie and what officers were made at the feast of sir Gareth and dame Lioness wedding, and of the great justing at the same feast and wedding.*

SO it drew fast to Mighelmasse, and thither came dame Lioness and her sister dame Linet, with sir Gringamor their brother with them. And there they were lodged at the devise of king Arthur. And on Mighelmasse day the archbishop of Canterbury made the wedding betweene sir Gareth and the lady Lioness with great solemnitie. And king Arthur made sir Gaheris to wed the damosell savage that was dame Linet. And king Arthur made sir Agravaine to wed dame Lioness neece, a faire lady, her name was dame Laurell. And so when this solemnisation was done, then there came in the greene knight that

¹ Weld.—Possess.

hight sir Pertolope, with thirtie knights. Then sir Pertolope said to sir Gareth, 'I pray you that at this feast I may be your chamberlaine.' Then came in the red knight, with threescore knights with him, and then sir Perimones prayed sir Gareth to graunt him for to be his chiefe butler at that high feast. Then came in sir Persaunt of Inde, with an hundred knights with him, and then hee prayed sir Gareth to make him the chiefe sewer¹ at the feast. Then came in the duke de la Rowse, with an hundred knights with him, and there he did homage and fealtie unto sir Gareth, and he required sir Gareth that he might serve him of the wine that day at the feast. Then came in the red knight of the red launds, that was sir Ironside, and he brought with him three hundred knights, and then he asked sir Gareth to be his karver. And all these knights and their followers did homage and fealty unto sir Gareth, and so to hold their lands of him for ever. Then came into the court thirtie ladies, and all they seemed widdowes, and those thirtie ladies brought with them many faire gentlewomen, and they all kneeled downe at once unto king Arthur and unto sir Gareth, and there all those ladies told the king how sir Gareth had delivered them from the dolorous towre, and slew the browne knight without pitie, 'and therefore wee and our heires for evermore will doe homage unto sir Gareth of Orkeney.' So then the kings and queens, princes, earles, and barons, and many bold knights, went unto meate, and there was all manner revelles and games, with all manner of musicke that was used in those dayes. Also there was great justing three dayes. But the king would not suffer sir Gareth to just because of his new bride. For the French booke saith that dame Lyones desired the king that none of them that were wedded should just at that feast. And then king Arthur sent for sir Persaunt of Inde and his two bretheren, and for sir Ironside, the red knight, and for the duke de la Rowse, and hee made them all knights of the round table, and gave them great lands to spend. But when these justs were done, sir Lamorake and sir Tristram departed sudainely, and would not be known, for the which king Arthur and all his court were sore displeased. And so they held the feast fortie dayes with great solemnity. And this sir Gareth was a full noble knight, and a well ruled, and faire languaged.

Thus endeth the history of sir Gareth of Orkeney, that wedded dame Lyones of the castle perillous. And also sir Gaheris wedded her sister dame Lynet, that was called the damosell savage. And sir Agravaine wedded dame Laurell, a faire lady. And great and mightie lands with great riches gave with them the noble king Arthur, that royally they might live unto their lives end.

¹ *Sewer*.—The officer who placed the dishes on the table.

BOOK II.

CHAP. I.—*How sir Tristram de Lyones was borne, and how his mother dyed at his birth, wherefore shee desired that his name should be Tristram.*

THERE was a knight¹ that hight Meliodas², and he was lord and king of the countrey of Lyones³, and this king Meliodas wedded king Markes sister of Cornewaile, whose name was Elizabeth, and shee was a right faire lady and a good. And at that time king Arthur raigned, and hee was all whole king of England, Wales, and Ireland⁴, and also of Scotland, and of many other realmes; how bee it there were many kings that were lords of many countries, but all they held their lands of king Arthur. For in Wales were two kings, and in the north were many kings, and in Cornewaile and in the west were two kings; also in Ireland were two or three kings; and all were under the obeysance of king Arthur, and so was the king of France and the king of Britaine⁵, and all the lordships unto Rome. Then was there a lady in that countrey that had loved king Meliodas long and by no manner of meanes shee could never get his love; therefore upon a day she let ordaine for him as hee rode on hunting, for hee was a great hunter, and there by enchauntment shee made him chace an hart by himselfe alone till that he came to an old castle, and there anon he was taken prisoner by the lady that loved him. When Elizabeth, king Meliodas wife, missed her lord, she was nigh out of her wit, and shee tooke a gentlewoman with her and ranne straight unto the forrest for to seeke her lord and husband. And when shee was farre within the forrest, she might goe no farther, and her gentlewoman holpe her all that she might. And so by miracles of our Lady of Heaven her baby was born in the forest, but shee had taken such cold for default of helpe, that needs shee must die and none other boote⁶ there was. And when this queene Elizabeth saw there was none other boote, then she made great moone and sorrow, and said unto her gentlewoman: 'When yee see my lord king Meliodas, recommend me unto him, and tell him what paines I endure for his love, and how I must die heere for his sake, and for default of

¹ *A knight.*—*A kyng*, Caxton.

² *Meliadas.*—Meliadus of Léonnois, the father of sir Tristram, was the subject of a separate romance, written in French by a rather celebrated medieval writer, Rusticien de Pise, a more modern French compilation from which was printed at Paris in 1528.

³ *Lyones.*—The native countrey of Tristram was evidently the Léonnois in Britany, though some have imagined it to have been a district of Cornwall so named, which is said to be now buried under the sea. Marie de France, in the *Lai de Chèvre-feuille*, makes him a native of South Wales.

En Suht-Wales à il fu nez.

⁴ *Ireland.*—Caxton's text omits Ireland.

⁵ *Britaine.*—i.e. Britany.

⁶ *Boote.*—Remedy; help.

good helpe, and let him wit that I am full sorry to depart out of this world from him, therefore pray him to bee good friend unto my soule.

'Now let mee see, I pray you, my little child for whom I have had all this sorrow.' And when shee saw him, thus shee said, 'Ah, my little sonne, thou art full likely to bee a manly man in thine age. And because I shall die of the birth of thee, I charge thee, gentlewoman, that thou beseech my lord king Meliodas, that when my son shall be christened let him be named Tristram, that is as much to say as sorrowfull birth¹.' And therewithall this queene Elizabeth gave up her ghost, and died in the same place. Then the gentlewoman laid her under the shadow of a great tree, and then shee lapped the child as well as she might for cold. Right so forth withall there came the barons following after the queene, and then they saw that the queene was dead, and understood none other but that the king was destroyed;

CHAP. II.—*How the step-mother of sir Tristram had ordained poyson for to have poysoned young Tristram.*

THEN a certaine of them would have slaine the child, because they would have bene lords of the country of Lyones. But then through the faire speech of the gentlewoman, and by the meanes that she made, the most part of the great barons and lords would not assent thereto, and then they let cary home the dead queene, and great mone was made for her. The meane while Merlin delivered king Meliodas out of prison, on the morrow after his queene was dead. And so when the king was come home, the most part of his barons made great joy; but the sorrow that the king made for his queene no tongue can tell it. And after hee let the child be christened, as his wife had commanded afore her death. Then, after seaven yeares, king Meliodas wedded king Howels daughter of Britaine, and anon shee had children of king Meliodas, then was shee wroth that her children should not rejoyce² the cuntry of Lyones, wherefore this queene ordained for to poyson young Tristram. So she let poyson to be put into a peece of silver in the chamber where as Tristram and her children were together, to the entent that when Tristram were thirstie he should drinke that drinke. And so it befell upon a day that the queenes son, as he was in that chamber, espied the peece with poyson, and hee wend it had bene good drinke, and he tooke the peece with

¹ *As sorrowfull birth.*—The circumstances of the birth of Tristram, and the origin of his name, are nearly the same in all the versions of the romance. According to the French prose romance, which calls the queen Isabella, she was accompanied into the wood not by a gentlewoman, but by her esquire, Gouvernail, who assisted in her delivery.

² *Rejoyce.*—Used here as an active verb, in the sense of to enjoy.

poyson and dranke fiercely¹, and therewith sodainly the child brast and died. But yet the king Meliodas understood nothing of the treason. Notwithstanding, the queene would not leave this, but ofte shee ordained more poyson and put it in a peece². And by fortune the king Meliodas found the peece with the wine where as the poyson was in, and hee, that was most thirstic, tooke the peece for to drinke thereof, and the queene espied him, and then she ranne unto him and pulled the peece from him sodainly. The king mervailed why she did so, and remembered him how her sonne was sodainly slaine with poyson. And then hee tooke her by the hand, and thus said to her: 'Thou false traitresse, thou shalt tell me what manner of drinke this is, or else I shall sleigh thee.' And therewith he pulled out his sword, and swore a great oath that he would sleigh her but if she told him truth. 'Ah! mercy, my lord,' said she, 'and I shall tell you all.' And then shee told him why that shee would have slaine Tristram, because her children should rejoyce the land. 'Well,' said king Meliodas, 'therefore shall yee have the law.' And so shee was damned³ by the assent of the barons to be burnt; and then there was made a great fire, and right as shee was at the fire for to take her execution, young Tristram kneeled down before king Meliodas, his father, and besought him to give him a boone. 'I will well,' said the king. Then said young Tristram, 'Give me the life of your queene, my step-mother.' 'Sith it is so,' said the king, 'I will that yee have her life and give her to you, and goe ye to the fire and take her, and doe with her what yee will.' So young Tristram went to the fire, and, by the command of the king, delivered her from the death.

CHAP. III.—*How young Tristram was sent into France, and had one to governe him named Governale, and how hee learned to harpe, hawke, and hunt.*

AND then king Meliodas let ordaine a gentleman that was wel learned and taught, his name was Governale⁴, and then hee sent his sonne Tristram with Governale into France to learne the language, and nurture, and deeds of armes; and there was Tristram more then seaven yeares, and then he came home againe to his father king Meliodas, and so Tristram learned to be an harper passing all other, that there was none such called in no countrey. And so in harping and on instruments of musike hee applied him in his youth for to learne, and after as hee growed in his might and strength, he laboured ever

¹ *Fiercely*.—Caxton, *frely*.

² *Peece*.—An old name for a cup.

³ *Damned*.—Condemned to death.

⁴ *Governale*.—This individual, who is called in the French romance *Gouvernail*, is there said to have been an esquire of the queen of Léonois before Tristram's birth.

in hunting and hawking, so that we never read of no gentleman more that so used himselfe therein. And therefore the booke of venery of hawking and hunting is called the booke of sir Tristram¹. Thus young Tristram continued in Cornewaile untill he was big and strong of the age of nineteene yeares, and then king Meliodas his father had great joy of Tristram his son, and so had the queen his wife, for ever after al her life, beecause Tristram saved her from the fire.

CHAP. IV.—*How sir Marhaus came out of Ireland for to aske truage of Cornewaile, or else he would fight therefore.*

THEN it befell that king Anguish of Ireland sent to king Marke of Cornewaile for his truage, which Cornewaile had payed many winters afore time, and all that time king Marke was behind of the truage for seven yeares. And king Marke and his barons gave unto the messenger of Ireland this answer, that they would none pay. And when king Anguish understood the answere of the messenger, he was wonderous wroth; and then he called unto him sir Marhaus², that was a knight of the round table. And this sir Marhaus was brother unto the queene of Ireland. Then the king said thus unto him: 'Faire brother sir Marhaus, I pray you goe into Cornewaile for my sake, and doe battaile for our truage that wec of right ought to have, and whatsoever yee spend yee shall have sufficiently more then yee shall neede.' So in all the hast there was made purveiance for sir Marhaus, and so hee departed out of Ireland, and arrived up in Cornewaile even fast by the castle of Tintagill. And so, when king Marke understood that there was arrived for to fight for Ireland the noble knight sir Marhaus, then made hee great moane and sorrow, for he knew no knight that durst have to doe with him. For at that season sir Marhaus was called one of the famoust and the most renowned knights of the world.

And thus sir Marhaus abode still in his ship on the sea, and every day he sent unto king Marke for to pay the truage, or else to find a knight to fight with him for the truage. The meane while came the noyse unto king Meliodas, how sir Marhaus abode battaile fast by the castle of Tintagill, and how king Marke could find no manner of knight to fight with him. When young Tristram heard this hee was wroth and sore ashamed, that there durst no knight in Cornewaile have to doe with sir Marhaus of Ireland.

¹ *Booke of sir Tristram*.—There was a book of authority in hunting which went under the name of Tristram, but it does not appear to have had really any connection with the name of the hero of our romance. The well-known Boke of St. Albans is supposed to represent this 'booke of sir Tristram.'

² *Sir Marhaus*.—We have already had some anecdotes of this personage in the first part of this work (see book i. pp. 123-125, 130-132). He is very celebrated in this cycle of romance, under the variations in his name of Marhaus (as here) or Morhaus, Moraunt (as in the English metrical romance of sir Tristrem), Morholf, &c.

CHAP. V.—*How Tristram enterprised the battaile to fight for the truage of Cornewaile, and how and of whom he was made knight.*

THEREWITH Tristram went unto his father king Meliodas, and asked him counsaile what was best to doe for to recover the countrie of Cornewaile for truage. ‘As for that,’ said king Meliodas, ‘wit ye wel, my sonne Tristram, that sir Marhaus is called one of the best knights of the world, and knight of the round table, and therefore I know no knight in this countrie that is able to match with him.’ ‘Alas!’ said Tristram, ‘that I am not made knight, and if I were made knight I should match him; and sir, I pray you to give me leave to ride unto mine uncle king Marke, and so yee be not displeased, of king Marke will I bee made knight.’ ‘I will well,’ said king Meliodas, ‘that yee be ruled as your courage will rule you.’ So this young Tristram rode¹ unto his uncle king Marke of Cornewaile, and said, ‘Sir, if yee will give mee the order of knighthood, I shall doe battaile to the uttermost with sir Marhaus of Ireland.’ ‘What are yee?’ said the king, ‘and from whence come yee?’ ‘Sir,’ said Tristram, ‘I come from king Meliodas that wedded your sister, and wit ye wel that I am a gentleman.’ ‘Yee say well,’ said king Marke, ‘and yee will doe this battaile, I shall make you knight.’ And then king Marke made him knight. And forthwith he sent a messenger with letters unto sir Marhaus, which said thus, that hee had found a young knight ready to take the battaile unto the uttermost. ‘It may well be,’ said sir Marhaus, ‘but tell unto king Marke that I wil not fight with no knight, but if he be either a kings sonne or a queenes sonne borne, or else of a prince or a princesse.’

When king Marke understood that, he sent for sir Tristram de Liones, and told him what was the answeere of sir Marhaus. And then sir Tristram said, ‘Sithence he sayeth so, let him know that I am come, both of fathers side, and of mothers side, of as noble blood as he is. For now shall ye know that I am the sonne of king Meliodas and of your owne sister dame Elizabeth, that died in the forrest in the birth of mee.’ ‘Oh, Jesus,’ said King Marke, ‘yee are right hartily welcome, faire nephew, unto me.’ And then king Marke sent unto sir Marhaus that a better borne man then hee was himselfe should fight with him, and that his name was sir Tristram de Liones, the sonne of king Meliodas, and of king Markes sister. And so by the assent of king Marke and sir Marhaus, they let ordaine that they should fight within an iland nigh sir Marhaus ships.

¹ *Rode*.—All these repetitions of *ride* and *rode* would seem to intimate that the Léonnois was on the same land with Cornwall, and that either Mark's kingdom was Cornouaille in Britany, or that Léonnois was in England. But the geography and topography of our romance is not very comprehensible.

CHAP. VI.—*How sir Tristram fought against sir Marhaus and finished his battell, and how sir Marhaus fled to his ships.*

WHEN sir Marhaus perceived sir Tristram, hee said unto him : ‘ Young knight sir Tristram, what doest thou heere ? me sore repenteth of thy courage, for I have matched with the best knights of the world, and therefore by my counsaile returne againe to thy ship.’ ‘ Faire knight and well proved knight,’ said sir Tristram, ‘ thou shalt well wit that I may not forsake thee in this quarrell, for I am for thy sake made knight. Also wit yee well, sir Marhaus, that this is the greatest cause that yee courage me for to have to doe with you, for ye are called one of the best renowned knights of the world, and because of that noyse and fame that yee have, it will doe me good to have to doe with you, and for to deliver the countrey of Cornewaile for ever from all manner of truage from Ireland.’ And then they began for to futre¹ their speares, and they met so fiersly together that they smote either other down both horse and al to the earth. But sir Marhaus smote sir Tristram a great wound in his side with his speare, and then they avoided their horses, and drew out their swords anon, and fought more then halfe a day, and were both sore wounded, that the blood ran downe from them on every side to the ground. By then Tristram waxed more fresher then sir Marhaus, and with a mighty strooke hee smote sir Marhaus upon the helme such a buffet that it went through his helme, and through his coyfe² of steele, so that his sword stucke so fast in the helme and in his braine pan, that sir Tristram pulled thrice at his sword or hee might pull it out from his head. And suddenly sir Marhaus arose, and threw his sword and his shield from him, and so ran unto his shippes and fled his way, and sir Tristram had ever still his owne shield and his sword. ‘ Well, sir knight,’ said sir Tristram, ‘ I promise thee thy sword and thy shield shall bee mine, and thy shield shall I weare in all places where I ride on mine adventures, and in the sight of king Arthur and all the round table.’

CHAP. VII.—*How sir Marhaus, after he was arrived in Ireland, died of the great strooke that sir Tristram had given him, and how sir Tristram was hurt.*

THEN anon sir Marhaus and his fellowship departed and went toward Ireland. And so soone as he came unto the king his brother, he let search his wounds, and, when his head was searched, a peece of sir Tristrams sword was found therein, and might never be had out of his head for no surgions, and so he died of sir Tristrams sword, and that peece of the sword the

¹ *To futre.*—To fix the spear in the rest ; more correctly spelt *fewtre* or *feuter*.

² *Coyfe.*—A hood of mail, worn by knights in the place of a helmet.

queene his sister kept it for ever with her, for she thought to be revenged and she might.

Now turne wee againe unto sir Tristram, which was sore wounded and lay in his bed a month and more, and was like to have died of the strooke that sir Marhaus had given him first with his speare. For as the French booke saith, that speares head was envenimed, that sir Tristram might not be hole thereof. So the king let send after all manner of leeches, and surgions¹, both men and women, and there was none that would warrant him his life. Then came there a full wise lady, and shee said plainly that sir Tristram should never be whole, but if he went into the same cuntry that the venime came from. When king Marke had well heard what the lady said, forthwith hee let purvey a faire vessell, and therein was put sir Tristram and Governale with him, and sir Tristram tooke his harpe, and so hee was put to sea, for to saile into Ireland, and so by good fortune he arrived up into Ireland even fast by a castle where the king and the queene were, and at his arriving he sat and harped in his bed a merry lay, such one had they never heard in Ireland afore that time. And when it was told the king and the queene of such a knight that was such a harper, anon the king sent for him, and let search his wound, and then he asked him what was his name. He answered and said: 'I am of the cuntry of Lyones, and my name is sir Tramtrist², that have beene thus wounded in a battaile as I fought for a ladies right.' 'So God me helpe,' said king Anguish, 'yee shall have all the helpe in this land that yee may have.'

'But I let you wit that in Cornewaile I have had a great losse as ever had king, for there I lost the best knight of the world, his name was sir Marhaus, a noble knight, and a knight of the round table.' Sir Tristram made semblance as hee had been sory, and better knew he how it was then the king.

CHAP. VIII.—*How sir Tristram was first put to the ward and keeping of La beale Isonde³ for to be healed of his wound.*

THEN the king made sir Tramtrist to bee put in his daughters ward and keeping, because she was a noble surcion⁴, And she found in the bottom of his wound that there was poyson, and within a litle while she healed him, and therefore Tramtrist

¹ *Surgions*.—Caxton, *surgens*. The word surgeon appears to have been a popular corruption of chirurgion, which existed in conversation before it appeared in writing.

² *Sir Tramtrist*.—This rather clumsy attempt at concealing the name by transposing the two syllables of which it was composed, is an incidence in the romance in all its different forms.

³ *Isonde*.—The *n* and *n* in medieval MSS. cannot be distinguished unless we know which the letter ought to be, and not only has our text of 1634 printed *Isonde* for the *Isonde* of Caxton, but the same error was made by sir Walter Scott in his edition of the English sir Tristrem. The error is a very inexcusable one in a modern edition, because it is well known that the name which it represents is *Isolde* or, as sometimes written in French, *Isolt*.

⁴ *A noble surcion*.—Surgery and medicine were the great accomplishments of the

cast great love to La beale Isoude, and there sir Tramtrist learned her to harpe, and she began to have a great fantesie unto sir Tramtrist. And at that time sir Palomides, that was a Sarasin, was in that countrie, and was well cherished both of the king and the queene, and every day this sir Palomides drew unto La beale Isoude, and he profered her many great gifts, for he loved her passing well. And sir Tramtrist had great despite at sir Palomides, for La beale Isoude told sir Tramtrist that sir Palomides was in will to be christened for her sake. Thus was there great envy betweene sir Tramtrist and sir Palomides. Then it beefell that king Anguish let crie a great justs and a great turnement for a lady which was called the lady of the launds, and she was nigh cosin unto the king, and what man that should winne her should wed her three dayes after, and have all her lands. This crie was made in England, Wales, and Scotland, and also in France and in Britaine. It befell upon a day La beale Isoude came to sir Tramtrist and told him of this turnement. 'Ah! Tramtrist,' said La beale Isoude, 'why will yee not have to doe at that turnament? well I wot sir Palomides will bee there and is like to winne the degree.' 'Madame,' said sir Tramtrist, 'as for that hee may doe so, for he is a proved knight. But and I wist that yee would bee my better lady, at that turnament will I bee, so that ye will keepe my counsell and let no creature have knowledge that I shall just but your selfe and such as yee will to keepe your counsell; my poore person shall I jeopard there for your sake, that per-adventure sir Palomides shall know when I come.' So at the day of justs there came sir Palomides with a blacke shield, and he overthrew many knights, that all the people had mervaile of him, for he put to the worst sir Gawaine, Gaheris, Agrovaine, Bagdemagus, Kay, Dodinas le Savage, Sagramore le Desyrous, Gunret le Pitic¹, and Griflet le Fisc de Dicu, all these the first day sir Palomides strake downe to the earth. So that day sir Palomides had great worship.

Then came king Anguish unto sir Tramtrist, and asked him why he would not just. 'Sir,' said he, 'I was but late hurt, and as yet I dare not adventure me.' Then came there the same squire that was sent from the kings daughter of France unto sir Tristram, and when he had espied sir Tristram hee fell flat unto his secte. All that espied La beale Isoude, and saw what courtesie the squire made unto sir Tristram. And therewithall sodainly sir Tristram ranne unto his squire, whose name was Hebes le Renommés, and praied him heartily in no wise to tell his name. 'Sir,' said Hebes, 'I will not discover your name but if yee command mee.'

medieval ladies, and it was this particular class of accomplishments which made them so much dreaded as poisoners and, in popular superstition, sorceresses. We find queens, princesses, and great ladies, figuring in this romance under all these qualifications.

¹ *Gunret le Pitic.*—*Gunret le Pelyte*, Caxton.

CHAP. IX.—*How sir Tristram won the degree at a tournament in Ireland, and there made sir Palomides to beare no harneis in a yeare.*

THEN sir Tristram asked him what he did in that countrey. 'Sir,' said he, 'I am come hither with sir Gawaine for to be made knight, and if it please you that of your hands I may be made knight.' 'Wait on me secretly to morrow, and in the field I shall make you a knight.' And so on the morrow sir Palomides made him ready for to come into the field as he did the first day, and there he smote down the king with an hundred knights and the king of Scotland. Then had La beale Isoude ordained and well arrayed sir Tramtrist all in white both horse and harneis, and right so shee put him out at a privie posterne, and so hee came into the field, as white as it had beene a bright angel. And anon sir Palomides espied him, and therewith he feutred a great speare unto sir Tristram, and sir Tristram to him againe, and there sir Tristram smote downe sir Palomides unto the earth. And then there was a great noyse of people, and wit ye well that La beale Isoud was passing glad. And then sir Gawaine and his nine fellowes had marvaile what knight it might be that had smitten downe sir Palomides. Then sir Tristram made Hebes knight, and caused him to put himselfe forth, and did right well that day. And when sir Palomides had received the fall, wit yee well hee was right sore ashamed, and as privily as hee might hee withdrew him out of the field. And all that espied sir Tristram, and lightly hee rode after sir Palomides, and bad him turne for he would better assay him or he departed. And then sir Palomides turned him, and either lashed at other with their swords. But at the first strooke sir Tristram smote downe sir Palomides. And then sir Tristram bad yeeld him and doe his commandement, or else hee would slay him. And when sir Palomides beheld his countenance, he dread sore his buffets, so that he graunted him al his asking. 'Well,' said sir Tristram unto him, 'this shall be your charge. First, upon paine of your life, that yee forsake my lady La beale Isoud, and in no maner of wise that yee draw unto her, and also these twelve monethes and a day that ye beare none armour nor in like wise no harneis of warre. Now promise me this, or heere shalt thou die.' 'Alas!' said sir Palomides, 'now am I for ever shamed.' And then he swore as sir Tristram had commanded him. Then, for great dispite and anger, sir Palomides cut off his harneis and threw it away. And so sir Tristram returned again unto the castle where as La beale Isoud was, and rode privily unto the posterne where La beale Isoud kept him, and there shee made him full good cheere, and thanked God of his good speede. So anon within a while the king and the queene understood that it was Tramtrist that smote down sir Palomides, then was hee much made of, and set by more then he was before.

CHAP. X.—*How the queene espied that sir Tristram had slaine her brother sir Marhaus by his sword, and in what jeopardy he was.*

THUS was sir Tramtrist long there well cherished with the king and the queene, and namely with La beale Isoud. So upon a day the queene and La beale Isoud made a bayne¹ for sir Tramtrist, and when hee was in his bayne, the queene and her daughter La beale Isoud rouned² up and downe in the chamber, and there whiles Governale and Hebes attended upon Tramtrist, and the queene beheld his sword whereas it lay upon his bed. And then by unhap the queene drew out his sword and beheld it a long while, and both they thought it a passing faire sword, but within a foote and a halfe of the point there was a great peece brooken out of the edge. And when the queen espied that gap in the sword, shee remembered of a peece of a sword that was found in the braine panne of the good knight sir Marhaus that was her brother³. 'Alas!' said shee then to her daughter La beale Isoud, 'this is the same traitrous knight that slew my brother thine uncle.' When La beale Isoud heard her say so, she was then passing sore abashed, for she loved sir Tramtrist passingly well, and right well shee knew the cruelnesse of her mother the queene. And so forthwith the queene caught that sword fiersly in her hand, and with all her might shee ranne straight unto Tramtrist where he sat in a bayne, and there shee had runne him through had not sir Hebes gotten her in his armes and pulled the sword from her. When shee was thus letted of her evil will, she ran to king Anguish her husband, and fell on her knees before him, saying, 'Oh, my lord and husband, heere have ye in your house that traitour knight that slew my brother, and your servant, that noble knight sir Marhaus.' 'Who is that,' said king Anguish, 'and where is hee?' 'Sir,' said shee, 'it is sir Tramtrist, the same knight that my daughter hath healed.' 'Alas!' said king Anguish, 'therefore am I right heavie, for he is a ful noble knight as ever I saw in field, but I charge you,' said the king to the queene, 'that yee have not to doe with this knight, but let me deale with him.' Then the king went into the chamber to sir Tramtrist, that then was gone unto his chamber, and then the king found him all armed, ready to mount upon his horse. And the king said, 'Nay, Tramtrist, it will not availe thee to compare against me. But thus much will I doe for my worship, and for thy love: in so much as thou art within this court, it were no worship for mee to slay thee, therefore upon this condition I will give thee leave to depart from this court in safetie, so that thou wilt tell me who is thy father, and what is thy name, and if thou slew my brother sir Marhaus.'

¹ *A bayne.*—A bath.

² *Rouned.*—Wandered; roamed.

³ *Her brother.*—In the French prose romance, it is not Tristram's sword which the Irish queen recognises by the fragment broken from it, but Morholt's own sword which Tristram had captured and carried with him.

CHAP. XI.—*How sir Tristram departed from king Anguish and La beale Isoud out of Ireland for to come into Cornewaile.*

‘SIR,’ said sir Tristram, ‘now shall I tell you all the truth; my fathers name is Meliodas, king of Liones, and my mother hight Elizabeth, that was sister unto king Marke of Cornewaile, and my mother died of me in the forrest, and because thereof she commanded or she died that when I were christned that they should name mee Tristram, and because I would not be knownen in this countrie, I turned my name, and let cal mee Tramtrist; and for the truage of Cornewaile, I fought for mine uncles sake, and for the right of Cornewaile that yee had possessed many yeares. And wit yee well, I did the battaile for the love of mine uncle king Marke and for the love of the countrey of Cornewaile, and for to encrease mine honour, for that same day that I fought with sir Marhaus I was made knight.’ ‘So God me helpe,’ said the king, ‘I may not say but ye did as a good knight should doe; how bee it I may not maintaine you in this countrey with my worship, unlesse I would displease my barons and my wife and her kinne.’ ‘Sir,’ said sir Tristram, ‘I thank you of your goodnesse that I have had with you heere, and of the great goodnesse that my lady your daughter hath shewed mee: and I promise you as I am true knight, that in all places I shall bee my lady your daughters servant and knight in right and in wrong, and I shall never faile her to doe as much as a knight may doe. Alsoe I beseech your good grace that I may take my leave of my lady your daughter, and at all the barons and knights.’ ‘I will,’ said the king. Then sir Tristram went unto La beale Isoud, and tooke his leave of her. ‘Madame,’ said sir Tristram, ‘yee shall understand that my name is sir Tristram de Liones. And I promise you faithfully that I shall be all the dayes of my life your knight.’ ‘Sir, gramercy,’ said La beale Isoud, ‘and there againe I promise you that I shall not be marryed of this seaven yeare but if it be by your assent, and to whom ye will I shall be married, him shall I have, if hee will have mee, if yee will consent.’ And then sir Tristram gave her a ring, and she gave him another, and therewith he departed from her, leaving her making full great moane and lamentation, and hee went straight unto the court among all the barons, and there hee said: ‘Fairst lords, now it is so that I must depart from hence, if there be any man heere that I have offended unto, let him complaine heere before me or I depart from hence, and I shall amend it unto my power. And all they stood still, there was not one that would say one word, yet were there some knights which were of the queenes blood and of sir Marhaus blood, but they would not meddle with him.

CHAP. XII.—*How sir Tristram and king Marke hurt each other for the love of a knight's wife.*

SO sir Tristram departed and tooke the sea, and with good wind hee arrived up at Tintagill in Cornewaile. And when hee saw his time, hee rode unto his father king Meliodas. And then largely king Meliodas and his queene parted of their lands and goods unto sir Tristram. So then he returned againe unto the court of king Marke, and there he lived in great joy long time, untill at the last there befell a jealousie and an unkindnesse betweene king Marke and sir Tristram, for they loved both one lady, and shee was an earles wife that hight sir Segwarides. And this lady loved sir Tristram passing wel, and he loved her againe, for she was a passing faire lady, and that espied well sir Tristram. So it befell upon a day that this lady sent a dwarfe unto sir Tristram, and bad him say that, as he loved her, that he would be with her the next night following, 'and charge him that he come not to mee but if hee bee well armed;' for her lord was called a good knight. When king Marke espied that the dwarfe had bene with sir Tristram on message from sir Segwarides wife, then sent king Marke for the dwarfe, and when he was come hee made the dwarfe by force to tell him all, why and wherefore he came on message to sir Tristram. 'Now,' said king Marke, 'goe where thou wilt, and upon paine of death that thou say no word that thou spakest with mee.' So the dwarfe departed from the king. And king Marke armed him and made him ready, and tooke two knights of his counsaile with him, and so he rode afore for to awaite sir Tristram. And as sir Tristram came riding on his way with his speare in his hand, sodainely king Marke came hurling upon him with his two knights, and king Marke hurt sir Tristram upon the breast right sore. And then sir Tristram smote his uncle king Marke such a strooke that he rushed¹ him to the earth and brused him sore, that he lay still in a sownd², and it was long or he might weld himselfe, and then he ranne to the one knight and oft³ to the other, and smote them both to the earth, that they lay still. And therewith sir Tristram rode forth to the lady sore wounded, and found her abiding him at a posterne.

CHAP. XIII.—*How sir Tristram supped with the lady, and how her husband fought with sir Tristram.*

AND there she full faire welcomed him, and either haused⁴ other in armes sweetly. And so shee let put up his horse in the best wise, and then shee unarmed him, and so they

¹ Rushed.—Dashed.

³ Oft.—Oftē, Caxton; doubtless for *efte*, again.

⁴ Haused.—i. e. halsed; embraced.

² Sownd.—Swoon.

lightly supped. And within a while there came one before that warned her that her lord was neere hand within a bowes draught. So sir Tristram armed him and made his way to the halle doore, and thereto the lady bore him company. By than was come sir Segwarides her lord, and as he entered the halle he saw sir Tristram departing in what haste hee might. Then sir Segwarides, as hee hurried to followe, was ware that his wife was at the doore of the halle taking farewell of the stranger knight with kisses and embraces; and as the lady returned into the halle sir Segwarides laid his grasp upon her shoulder. 'Ah, false traytresse,' said he then, 'why hast thou betrayed me?' And therewith he drew out his sword, and said, 'But if thou tell me who hath beene heere, here shalt thou die.' 'Ah, my lord, mercy,' said the lady, and held up her hands, saying, 'Slay me not, and I shall tell you who hath beene heere.' 'Tell mee anon,' said sir Segwarides, 'all the truth.' Anon for dread she said, 'Here was sir Tristram with me, and by the way as he came toward me hee was sore wounded.' Then he armed him lightly, and gat his horse and rode after sir Tristram, that rode straight the way unto Tintagill, and within a while he overtooke sir Tristram, and then hee bad him 'turne, false traytour knight.' Then anon sir Tristram turned him against him. And therewith sir Segwarides smote sir Tristram with a speare, that it all to brake in peeces. And then he drew out his sword, and smote sir Tristram full sore strookes. So sir Tristram drew out his sword, and spurred his horse unto him right fiercely, and through the wast of the body he smote sir Segwarides, that hee fell to the earth in a sowne. And so sir Tristram departed and left him there, and so he rode unto Tintagill, and tooke his lodging secretly, for he would not bee knowne that he was hurt. Also sir Segwarides men rode after their master, whom they found lying in the field sore wounded, and, when they saw him lie so, they tooke him up and brought him home upon his shield, but at the last he recovered. King Marke also would not bee knowne of, that sir Tristram and he had met that night. And as for sir Tristram hee wist not that it had beene king Marke that had met with him.

But as long as king Marke lived he never after loved sir Tristram, though there was much faire speech betweene them; and sir Segwarides durst no more have to doe with sir Tristram, because of his noble prowesse, and also because that hee was nephew unto king Marke. For hee that hath a privie hurt is loth to have a shame outward.

CHAP. XIV.—*How sir Bleoberis demanded the fairest lady in king Markes court, whom he tooke away, and how he was foughten with.*

THEN it befell upon a day that the good knight sir Bleoberis de Ganis came unto king Markes court, and there he asked of king Marke a boone to give him what gift hee would aske in his court. And because he was a knight of the round table and of a great renowne, king Marke graunted him his whole asking. Then said sir Bleoberis to king Marke: 'I will have the fairest lady in your court, the which me list to choose.' 'I may not say nay,' said king Marke, 'now choose at your adventure.' And then sir Bleoberis chose sir Segwarides wife, and anon he set her upon horsebacke behind his squire, and so he tooke his horse and rode forth on his way. When sir Segwarides heard tell that his lady was gone with a knight of king Arthurs court, then anon hee armed him and rode after that knight for to rescue his wife. Then were there certaine ladies that knew that there was great love betweene sir Tristram and her. And then there was a damosell that rebuked sir Tristram in the most foulest manner, and called him coward knight, that he would for shame of his knighthood see a lady so shamefully taken away from his uncles court. But sir Tristram answered her in this wise: 'Faire lady, it is not my part to have to doe in such matters, while her lord and husband is here present. And if so bee that sir Segwarides speede not well, then it may happen that I wil speake with that knight or he passe out of this cuntry.' So within a while came one of sir Segwarides squires, and told in the court that sir Segwarides was sore beaten and wounded, and in point of death. And when sir Tristram heard of this, he was ashamed, and sore grieved, and then was he soone armed and on horsebacke, and Governale his servant bare his shield and his speare. And so as sir Tristram rode he met with sir Andret his cosin, and he asked him what tidings. 'So God me helpe,' said sir Andret, 'it was never worse with me then now, and for here by the commandement of king Marke I was sent to fetch two knights of king Arthurs court, and the one beate mee and wounded mee, and set naught by my message.' 'Faire cosin,' said sir Tristram, 'ride on your way, and if I meete them it may happen I shall revenge you.' So sir Andret rode into Cornewaile, and sir Tristram rode after the two knights, of whom the one hight Sagamore le Desirous, and that other hight sir Dodinas le Savage.

CHAP. XV.—*How sir Tristram fought with two knights of the round table.*

THEN within a while sir Tristram saw before him the two likely knights. And anon therewith sir Tristram asked them from whence they came, and whether they would and

what they did in those marches. Sir Sagamore looked upon sir Tristram, and had scorne of his words, and said to him againe : ' Faire knight, it is but seldome heard seene, that yee Cornish knights be valiant men of armes. For within these two houres there met us one of your Cornish knights, and anon with little might he was laide on the earth, and as I trow, yee shall have the same hansell¹ that he had.' ' Faire lords,' said sir Tristram, ' it may happen I may better withstand than he did, and, whether yee will or not, I will have to doe with you, because he was my cosin that yee beate, and therefore here doe your best !' When sir Dodinas le Savage heard him say so, hee gat a speare in his hand, and said, ' Sir knight, keepe well thy selfe.' And then they departed, and came together as it had been thunder, and sir Dodinas speere brast asunder, but sir Tristram smote him cleane over his horse crouper, that nigh he had broken his necke. When sir Sagamore saw his fellow have such a fall, then he mervailed what hee might bee, and dressed his speere with all his might, and sir Tristram against him, and there sir Tristram smote sir Sagamore a great buffet that hee bare his horse and him to the earth, and in the falling he brake his thigh. When this was done, sir Tristram asked them, ' Faire knights, will yee any more ? It is to you great shame for to say dishonour of us knights of Cornewale, for it may happen a Cornish knight to match you both.' ' It is so,' said sir Sagamore, ' and that have wee well proved ; but I require you,' said sir Sagamore, ' tell us your right name, by the faith that yee owe unto the high order of knighthoode.' ' Ye charge mee with a great thing,' said sir Tristram, ' and sithence yee liste to witte, yee shall understand that my name is sir Tristram de Lyones, king Meliodas sonne, and nephew unto king Marke.' So sir Tristram departed and rode on his way, and then was he ware before him in a valey where sir Bleoberis rode, with sir Segwarides wife that rode behind his squire upon a palfrey.

CHAP. XVI.—*How sir Tristram fought with sir Bleoberis for a lady, and how the lady was put to choice unto whom she would goe.*

THEN sir Tristram rode till hee had overtaken sir Bleoberis. Then spake sir Tristram, ' Abide, sir knight of king Arthurs court, bring againe that lady or deliver her to me.' So they departed, and came together like thunder, and either bare other down horse and all to the earth. Then they avoyded their horses, and lashed together full egerly and mightily with their swords more than two houres. Then sir Bleoberis start backe, and said thus unto sir Tristram : ' Now, gentile knight,

¹ *Hansell*.—The hansell was, properly speaking, the first gain or profit upon anything. It means here simply that sir Tristram would have no better fortune than the other Cornish knight.

a while hold your hand, and let us two speake together. I would wit of whence yee bee, and of whom yee be come, and what is your name?' 'So God me help,' said sir Tristram, 'I feare not to tell you my name; wit yee well I am king Meliodas sonne, and my mother is king Markes sister, and my name is sir Tristram de Lyones.' 'Truely,' said sir Bleoberis, 'I am right glad of you; for yee are he that slew sir Marhaus for the truage of Cornewalle; also yee overcame sir Palomides at a turnement in Ireland, and there yee beate sir Gawaine and his nine felowes.' 'Now, so God me helpe,' said sir Tristram, 'wit yee well that I am the same knight; and now that I have told you my name, tell me yours.' 'With a good will, wit yee well my name is sir Bleoberis de Ganis, and my brother hight sir Blamore de Ganis, that is called a good knight, and wee be sisters children unto my lord sir Launcelot du Lake, which is called one of the best knights of the world.' 'That is truth,' said sir Tristram, 'sir Launcelot is called peerlesse of curtesie and of knighthood; and for his sake,' said sir Tristram, 'I will not with my good will fight no more with you, for the great love that I have unto sir Launcelot du Lake.' 'In good faith, sir,' said Bleoberis, 'as for me, I will be loth to fight with you. But sith yee follow me heere to have this lady, I shall proffer you kindnesse, curtesie, and gentlenesse right here upon this ground. This lady shall be betweene us both, and unto whom shee will goe, let him have her in peace.' 'I will well,' said sir Tristram, 'for, as I deeme, she will leave you and come to me.' 'Ye shall prove it anon,' said sir Bleoberis.

CHAP. XVII.—*How the lady forsooke sir Tristram and abode with sir Bleoberis, and how she desired to goe unto her husband.*

SO when she was set betweene them both, shee said these words unto sir Tristram: 'Wit yee well, sir Tristram, that but late you were the man in the world that I most loved and trusted; but when thou sawest this knight lead mee away, thou madest no semblance to rescue me, but suffredst my lord sir Segwarides ride after me; and therefore now I will leave thee and never love thee more.' And therewith shee went unto sir Bleoberis. When sir Tristram saw her doe so, hee was wonderous wroth with that lady, and was ashamed to come to the court. 'Sir Tristram,' said sir Bleoberis, 'yee are in the default, for I heare by this ladies words that shee before this day trusted you above all earthly knights; and rather than yee should be heartily displeased with me, I would yee had her and shee would abide with you.' 'Nay,' said the lady, 'so God me helpe, I will never goe with him. And I shall pray this knight so faire of his knighthood, that or hee passe this countrey that he will leade me to the abbey where my lord sir Segwarides

lyeth.' And so they tooke their leave, and departed one from another; and sir Tristram rode unto Tintagill, and sir Bleoberis rode unto the abbey where as sir Segwarides lay sore wounded, and there he delivered his lady, and departed as a noble knight. And when sir Segwarides saw his lady, hee was greatly comforted. And than she told him that sir Tristram had done a great battaile with sir Bleoberis, and caused him to bring her againe.

CHAP. XVIII.—*How king Marke sent sir Tristram for La beale Isoud towarde Ireland, and how by fortune he arrived in England.*

THEN when this was done, king Marke cast alwayes in his hart how he might destroy sir Tristram¹. And than he imagined in him selfe to send sir Tristram into Ireland for La beale Isoud; for sir Tristram had so praised her beauteie and her goodnesse, that king Marke said he would wed her, whereupon hee praied sir Tristram to take his way into Ireland for him on a message. So sir Tristram departed, and tooke the sea with all his fellowship. And anon as he was in the broad sea, a tempest tooke him and his fellowship and drove them backe into the coast of England, and there they arrived fast by Camelot², and full faine they were to take the land. And when they were landed, sir Tristram set up his pavilion upon the land of Camelot, and there he let hang his shield upon the pavillion; and that day came two knights of king Arthurs court, the one was sir Ector de Maris and that other was sir Morganore, and they touched the shield and bad him come out of the pavilion to just, and he would just. So he made him ready, and first he smote downe sir Ector de Maris, and after hee smote downe sir Morganore, all with one speare, and brused them sore. And when they lay upon the earth, they asked sir Tristram what he was, and of what countrey hee was knight. 'Faire lords,' said sir Tristram, 'wit yee well that I am of Cornewaile.' 'Alas,' said sir Ector, 'now am I ashamed that ever any Cornish knight should overcome mee.' And then for great despite sir Ector put off his armour from him, and went on foote, and would not ride.

CHAP. XIX.—*How king Anguish of Ireland was summoned to come unto king Arthurs court for treason.*

THEN it befell that sir Bleoberis de Ganis and sir Blamor de Ganis his brother had summoned king Anguish of Ireland to come unto king Arthurs court to answer for the death

¹ *Destroy sir Tristram.*—According to the French prose romance of sir Tristram, king Mark's enmity to the hero of the romance arose from a prophecy which had been made to him that the young Tristram was destined to ruin and dethrone him.

² *Camelot* is here placed on the coast. But it would be in vain to attempt to explain the geography of the compiler of this romance. See before, book i. p. 86.

of a knight, upon paine of forfeiture of king Arthurs good grace. So it hapned that at the day assigned king Arthur was with sir Launcelot at the castle Joyous-garde¹. And so king Arthur assigned king Carados and the king of Scotland to bee there that day as judges. So when the kings were at Camelot, king Anguish of Ireland was come to know his accusers. Then was there sir Blamor de Ganis, and accused the king of Ireland of treason, that hee had slaine a cosin of his in his court of Ireland by treason. And when the king had heard sir Blamor say his will, hee understood full well there was none other remedy but for to answere him knightly. For the custome was such in those dayes, that if any man were accused of any murther or treason, he should fight body for body, or else to find another knight for him. And when king Anguish understood his accusing, he was passing heavy, for hee knew well that sir Blamor de Ganis was a noble knight, and was also come of noble knights. Then was the king of Ireland simply purveyed of his answere, therefore the judges gave him respite by the third day to give his answere. So the king departed, and went into his lodging.

The meane while there came a lady going by sir Tristrams pavilion making great mone. 'What ayleth you,' said sir Tristram, 'that yee make such mone?' 'Ah, faire knight,' said the lady, 'I am shamed unlesse that some good knight helpe me, for a great lady of worship sent by me a faire child and a rich unto sir Launcelot du Lake, and heereby there met with me a knight and threw me downe from my palfrey, and tooke away the child from me.' 'Well, lady,' said sir Tristram, 'and for my lord sir Launcelots sake I shall get you that child againe, or else I shall be beaten for it.' And therewith sir Tristram tooke his horse, and asked the lady which a way the knight rode. And then she told him. And he rode after them, and within a while he overtooke the knight. And then sir Tristram bad him turne and give againe the child.

CHAP. XX.—*How sir Tristram rescued a child from a knight, and how Governale told him of king Anguish.*

THE knight turned his horse, and made him ready to fight. And then sir Tristram smote him with his sword such a buffet that hee tumbled downe to the ground. And then he yeeled him unto sir Tristram. 'Come on thy way,' said sir Tristram, 'and bring the child to the lady againe.' So he tooke his horse meekely, and rode with sir Tristram; and then, by the way, sir Tristram asked him his name, and he said, 'My name is Breus saunce pite.' So when he had delivered that

¹ *Joyous-garde*.—It is pretended that the castle of Joyous-Garde was Berwick-upon-Tweed, but I know not on what authority. It assumes a more prominent part in a subsequent part of this romance.

child to the lady, sir Tristram let him goe againe, which sore repented him afterward, for he was a great enemy unto many good knights of king Arthurs court. Then when sir Tristram was in his rich pavilion, Governale his man told to sir Tristram how king Anguish of Ireland was summoned and accused of murther. 'So God mee helpe,' said sir Tristram, 'these be the best tidings that ever came to me this seven yeare, for now shall the king of Ireland have neede of my helpe, and therefore, Governale, I charge thee to bring mee to the king.' And so Governale went unto king Anguish of Ireland, and saluted him faire. The king welcomed him, and asked him what he would. 'Sir,' said Governale, 'heere is a knight neere hand which desireth to speake with you; and he bad me say that he would doe you service.' 'What knight is he?' said the king. 'Sir,' said he, 'it is sir Tristram de Lioness, that for the good grace that yee shewed unto him in your land, he will reward you in this countrey.' 'Come on, good felow,' said the king, 'with me, and shew me sir Tristram.'

So the king tooke a litle hackney and a litle company with him, untill hee came unto sir Tristrams pavilion. And when sir Tristram saw king Anguish, hee ran unto him, and would have holden his strope. But anon the king leapt lightly from his horse, and either halsed¹ other in their armes. 'Ah, worshipfull knight,' said the king unto sir Tristram, 'now have I great need of you; for never had I so great need of no knights helpe.' 'Sir,' said sir Tristram, 'for the great goodnesse that yee shewed to me in Ireland, and for my lady your daughters sake, La beale Isoud, I will take the battaile in hand for you, so that upon this condition yee shall graunt me two things: that one is this, that yee shall be sworne unto me that yee are in the right, that yee were never consenting to the knights death: and when I have done this battaile, if God give me grace that I speede, yee shall give me a reward, what thing reasonable that I will aske of you.' 'So God me helpe,' said the king, 'yee shall have what so ever yee will aske.'

CHAP. XXI.—*How sir Tristram fought for king Anguish and overcame his adversary, and how his adversary would never yield him.*

NOW make answer that your champion were ready, for I shall rather die in your quarrell then to be recreant.' So king Anguish departed, and went unto the kings that were judges, and told them that he had found his champion ready. And then, by the commandment of the kings, sir Blamor de Ganis and sir Tristram de Lyones were sent for, to heare their charge. So when they had taken their charge, then they with-

¹ *Halsed*. Embraced. I have corrected this from Caxton's text; the edition of 1634 has *holded* an evident error.

drew them for to make them ready for to doe the battaile. Then said sir Bleoberis unto his brother sir Blamor, 'Faire brother, now remember of what kinne that we are come of, and what maner of man that sir Launcelot du Lake is, neither further nor neerer but brothers children; and rather suffer death, brother, then for to be shamed.' 'Brother,' said sir Blamor, 'have yee no doubt of mee, for I shall never shame none of my blood; but well may it happen him for to smite me downe with his great might of chivalry, but rather shall he sley me then I shall yeeld me unto him as recreant.' 'God speed you well,' said sir Bleoberis, 'for yee shall find him the mightiest knight that ever yee had to doe withall, and that know I right well, for I have had to doe with him.'

'God be my speede,' said sir Blamor; and therewith he tooke his horse at the one end of the listes, and sir Tristram at the other end, and so they feutred their speares and came together as it had beene thunder; and at the last sir Tristram smote sir Blamor such a buffet upon the helme that he fell downe upon his side, and sir Tristram stoode and beheld him.

CHAP. XXII.—*How sir Blamor desired sir Tristram to sley him, and how sir Tristram spared him, and how they tooke appointment.*

THEN when sir Blamor might speake, he said thus: 'Sir Tristram de Liones, I require thee, as thou art a noble knight, and the best knight that ever I found, that thou wilt sley me out of hand.' And when sir Tristram heard him say so knightly, he wist not what to doe with him; he remembered him of both parties of what blood he was come, and for sir Launcelots sake he would be full loth to sley him, and on that other parties in no wise he might not chuse, but he must make him to say the loth word, or else to sley him. And then sir Tristram start abacke and went to the kings which were judges; and there he kneeled downe before them, and besought them that they would take this matter in their hands: 'For, faire lords,' said sir Tristram, 'it were shame and pittie that this noble knight should be slaine, for ye may well heare that shamed he will not be, and I pray to God that he never be slaine nor shamed for me. And as for the king for whom I doe this battaile, I shall require him, as I am his true champion and true knight in this felde, that he will have mercy upon this good knight.' 'So God me helpe,' said king Anguish to sir Tristram, 'I will be ruled for your sake as yee will have me, and therefore I will heartily pray the kings that be here as judges for to take it into their hands.' And then the kings which were judges called sir Bleoberis unto them, and demanded him his advise. 'My lord,' said sir Bleoberis, 'though that my brother be beaten and hath the worse through might of armes, I dare well

say though sir Tristram hath beaten his body he hath not beaten his heart, I thanke God he is not shamed this day. And rather then he should be shamed, I require you let sir Tristram sley him out of hand.' 'It shall not be so,' said the kings, 'for his adverse partie both the king and the champion hath pitie of sir Blamors knighthode.' 'My lords,' said sir Bleoberis, 'I will right well as yee will.' And then sir Tristram and sir Bleoberis tooke up sir Blamor. And the two bretheren were accorded with king Anguish; and kissed each other; and sir Blamor and sir Tristram kissed each other; and there the two bretheren made their oathes that they would never non of them both fight with sir Tristram. And sir Tristram made the same oathe. And for that gentle battaile all the bloode of sir Launcelot loved sir Tristram for ever more. Then king Anguish and sir Tristram tooke their leave and sailed into Ireland with great joy and noblenesse.

CHAP. XXIII.—*How sir Tristram demanded La beale Isoud for king Marke, and how sir Tristram and La beale Isoud dranke the love-drinke.*

THEN on a day king Anguish asked sir Tristram why hee asked not his bone¹, for whatsomeever he had promised him, he should have it without any faile. 'Sir,' said sir Tristram, 'now is it time, this is all that I require of you, that yee will give me La beale Isoud your daughter, not for my self, but for my uncle king Marke of Cornewaile, that shall have her unto his wife; for so have I promised him.' 'Alas,' said the king, 'I had leaver then all the land that I have, that ye would wed her your selfe.' 'Sir,' said sir Tristram, 'if I had so, then were I ashamed for ever in this world, and should be false of my promise.' 'As for that,' said king Anguish, 'yee shall have her with you, and if that yee list to wed her your selfe that were me leavest, and if yee will give her unto king Marke your uncle, that may be in your choyse.'

So to make a short conclusion, La beale Isoud was made ready for to goe with sir Tristram, and dame Bragwaine² went with her for her chiefe gentlewoman, with many other. And then the queene, La beale Isoudes mother, gave unto dame Bragwain, her daughters gentlewoman, and unto Governale a drinke³, and charged them that what day king Marke should wed, that

¹ Bone.—Boon.

² Bragwaine.—The edition of 1634 has erroneously in this chapter *Bradwaine*. The lady's name is Brengien in the early French metrical romance; and Brengwain, or Bringwain, in the English romance edited by Sir Walter Scott; in Caxton, Brangwayne.

³ A drinke.—The skill of the ladies in the Middle Ages in composing and applying medicines is well known, and has been alluded to before. This qualification often included the composition of medicines for less legitimate purposes, as love potions, drinks to produce hatred, or bodily impotency, or derangement of the intellect, and in some cases was extended even to the making of poisons.

same day they should give him that drinke, so that king Marke should drinke unto La beale Isoud, 'and then I undertake,' said the queene, 'either shall love other all the dayes of their life.' So this drinke was given to Governale and to dame Bragwaine, and then anon sir Tristram and La beale Isoud tooke the sea. And when they were in their cabin, it hapned so that they were thirstie, and saw a little flacket¹ of gold stand by them, and it seemed by the colour and tast that it was noble wine. So sir Tristram tooke the flacket in his hand, and said, 'Madame Isoud, here is the best drinke that ever yee dranke, which dame Bragwaine your maide and Governale my servant have kept for themselves.' And then they dranke freely, and they thought never drinke that ever they dranke was so sweete nor so good. But by that their drinke was in their bodies, they loved ech other so well, that their love never departed for weale nor woe. And so longe they sailed til by fortune they came nigh a castle that hight Pluere, and there they arrived for to rest them, weeninge to them to have had good harborow. But anon as sir Tristram was within the castle, they were taken prisoners, for the custome of the castle was such, that who that rode by that castle and brought any lady, he must needs fight with the lord of that castle which hight sir Brewnor.

CHAP. XXIV.—*How sir Tristram and La beale Isoud were in prison, and how sir Tristram fought for the beauty of La beale Isoud and smote off another ladies head.*

THUS as sir Tristram and La beale Isoud were in prison, it hapned that a knight and a lady came to them where they were, to cherish them. 'I have great mervaille,' saide sir Tristram unto the knight and the lady, 'what is the cause that the lord of this castle holdeth us here in prison?' 'Sir,' said the knight, 'this is the old custome of this castle, that when any knight commeth here, hee must needs fight with our lord of this castle, and he that is the weakest must leese his head. And when that is done, if his lady that he bringeth with him be fouler then our lords wife, she must leese her head, and if she be fairer proved then our ladies, then shall the lady of the castle leese her head.' 'Now so God me helpe,' said sir Tristram, 'this is a right foule and a shamefull custome. But I have a lady is faire enough, and I doubt not for lacke of beautie she shall not leese her head. Wherefore, sir knight, I pray you for to tell your lord that I will be ready on the morrow with my lady, my selfe to battaile, if it be so that I may have my horse and mine armour.' 'Sir,' said the knight, 'I undertake that your desire shall be sped right well.' And therewith he departed, and on the morrow betimes that same knight came

¹ *Flacket*.—A flask.

unto sir Tristram and put him and his lady out of prison, and brought him horse and armour which was his owne, and bad him make him ready to the field. Then came sir Brewnor, the lord of that castle, holding his lady by the hand all muffled, and asked sir Tristram where his lady was. 'For and thy lady be fairer then mine, with thy sword smite off my ladies head, and if my lady be fairer then thine, with my sword I must strike off her head. And if that I winne thee, yet shall my lady be mine, and thou shalt leese thy head.'

'I doubt not,' said sir Tristram, 'my ladie is fairer then thine, and that will I prove and make good with mine owne hands. And who soever he be that will say the contrary, I will prove it upon his head.' And therewith sir Tristram shewed La beale Isoud, and turned her thrise about with his naked sword drawn in his hand. And when sir Brewnor saw that, he turned his lady about in the same wise. And so all the people that were there present gave judgement that La beale Isoud was the fairer lady and the better made lady. 'How now!' said sir Tristram, 'me seemeth it were great pittie that my lady should leese her head; but because that thou and thy lady of long time have used this wicked custome, and for that cause it were no great losse to destroy you both.' 'So God me helpe,' said sir Brewnor, 'for to say the truth, thy ladie is fairer then mine, and so I heare all the people previly say; for of all women I saw never none so faire, and therefore if thou wilt sley my lady, I doubt not but I shall sley thee and have thy lady.' 'Thou shalt winne her,' said sir Tristram, 'as deare as ever any knight wan lady, and because of thine owne judgement, as thou wouldest have done unto my lady if she had beene fouler, and because of thine evill custome, give me thy lady.' And therewithal sir Tristram went unto him, and tooke his lady from him, and with an auke¹ strooke he smote off her head.

CHAP. XXV.—*How sir Tristram fought with sir Brewnor, and at the last smote off his head.*

'**N**OW take thy horse, sith I have lost my lady, for I will winne thy lady and I may.' And they tooke their horse, and came together, and sir Tristram smote sir Brewnor from his horse, and lightly he arose up, and as sir Tristram came againe by him, he thrust his horse throughout both the shoulders, that his horse reeled here and there and fell dead to the earth. And ever sir Brewnor ran after to have slaine sir Tristram; but sir Tristram was light and nimble, and avoided his horse lightly; and thus they fought hurtling here and there nigh two houres, and either wounded other full sore; so anon

¹ *Auke strooke*.—A cross stroke.

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sir Tristram thrust sir Brehnour downe groveling, and then he unlaced his helme and strooke off his head. And then all they that longed to the castle came to him and did him homage and fealtie, praying him that he would abide here a little while to forbid that foule custome. The meane while one of the knights of the castle rode unto sir Galahaut, the haut prince, that was sir Brehnours sonne, which was a noble knight, and told him what misadventure his father had and his mother.

CHAP. XXVI.—*How sir Galahaut fought with Tristram, and how sir Tristram yeilded him and promised to fellowship with sir Launcelot.*

THEN came sir Galahaut, and the king with the hundred knights with him, and thus sir Galahaut profered to fight with sir Tristram hand for hand, and so they went to horseback with great courage. Sir Galahaut and sir Tristram met together so mightely that either bare other downe horse and all to the ground: and thus they fought neere halfe a day, and either were sore wounded. At the last sir Tristram waxed light and big, and doubled his strookes, and drove sir Galahaut abacke so that he was like to have beene slaine. With that came the king with the hundred knights, and al that fellowship fell fiercesly upon sir Tristram. When sir Tristram saw so many comming upon him, then he wist well that hee might not endure, and as a wise knight of warre he said unto sir Galahaut le haut prince: 'Sir, yee shew unto me no knighthood, for to suffer all your men to have to doe with me all at once.' 'So God me helpe,' said sir Galahaut unto sir Tristram, 'none other way there is but thou must yeeld thee unto mee, or else thou shalt die.' 'I will rather yeeld me unto you then die,' said sir Tristram; 'for that is more for the might of your men then for the might of your owne hands.' And therewith sir Tristram took his owne sword by the point, and put the pommel into the hand of sir Galahaut. And therewith came the king with the hundred knights, and there he began hard to assaile sir Tristram. 'Let be,' said sir Galahaut, 'be yee not so hardy to touch him, for I have given this knight his life.'

'That is unto you a great shame,' said the king with the hundred knights, 'hath he not slaine your father and your mother?' 'As for that,' said sir Galahaut, 'I may not greatly blame him, for my father had a shamefull custome, that what knight came there to aske harbor, his lady must needs die, but if shee were fairer than my mother, and if my father overcame that knight he must needs die; and for this custome I would never draw about him.' 'So God me helpe,' said the king with the hundred knights, 'this was a shamefull custome.' 'Now fair knight,' said sir Galahaut, 'I require thee tell me thy name, and of whence thou art, and whether thou wilt?' 'Sir,' said

he, 'my name is Tristram de Lioness, and from king Marke of Cornewaile I was sent on message to king Anguish of Ireland for to fetch his daughter to be his wife, and here she is ready to goe with me into Cornewaile, and her name is La beale Isoude.' Then said sir Galahault unto sir Tristram, 'Will yee be found in these marches, and so yee will promise me to goe unto sir Launcelot du Lake and accompany with him, yee shall goe where yee will, and your faire lady with you. And I shall promise you by the faith of my body never in al my dayes shall such customes be more used in this castle as there hath beene used.' 'Sir,' said sir Tristram, 'now I promise you, as soone as I may I will see sir Launcelot and enfellowship' me with him; for of all the knights of the world I desire much of his fellowship.'

CHAP. XXVII.—*How sir Launcelot du Lake met with king Carados bearing away sir Gawaine, and of the rescue of sir Gawaine.*

AND then sir Tristram tooke his leave, and tooke the sea. And in the meane while came word unto sir Launcelot, and unto sir Tristram, that sir Carados the mighty king, which was made like a giaunt, had fought with sir Gawaine and gave him such strookes that he swounded in his saddle, and after that hee tooke him by the collar and pulled him out of his saddle, and bound him fast to the saddle bow, and so rode his way with him towards his castle. And as he rode, by fortune sir Launcelot met with king Carados, and anon he knew sir Gawaine that lay bound behind him. And then sir Launcelot bad sir Carados lay downe that knight and fight with him. 'Thou art but a foole,' said sir Carados, 'for I will serve thee in the same wise.' 'As for that,' said sir Launcelot, 'spare me not, for I warne thee I will not spare thee.' And then either met with other, and brake their speares to their hands, and then they drew out their swords and hurtled together on horsebacke more then an houre. And at the last sir Launcelot smote sir Carados such a buffet upon his helme, that it went through the braine-pan². And then sir Launcelot unbound sir Gawaine. So this tale was told unto sir Galahault and unto sir Tristram. Then sir Tristram and La beale Isoud went to the sea, and came into Cornewaile, and there all the barrons met them.

CHAP. XXVIII.—*Of the wedding of king Marke to La beale Isoud, and of Bragwaine her maide, and of sir Palomides.*

AND anon king Marke and La beale Isoud were right richly wedded with great noblenesse. But ever (as the French booke saith) sir Tristram and La beale Isoud loved ever

¹ *Enfellowship*.—To associate; to enter into fraternity with any one.

² *Braine-pan*.—The skull.

together. Then was there made great justs and turnements, and many great lords and ladies were at that feast, and sir Tristram was most praised of all other. Then two ladies that were with queene Isoud, ordeined for hate and envie to destroy dame Bragwaine, which was maiden and gentlewoman unto La beale Isoud, and she was sent into a great forrest for to fetch herbes, and there she was met, and bounde hands and feete unto a tree, and so she was bound three dayes. And by fortune sir Palomides found dame Bragwaine, and there he delivered her from the death, and brought her to a nunry there beside to be recovered. And so upon a day the queene Isoud walked into the forrest for to put away her sorrowful thoughts, and there she went her selfe unto a well, and made great mone. And sodainly there came sir Palomides unto her, and had heard all her complaint, and said, 'Madame Isoud, and if yee will graunt me a bone, I shall bring unto you dame Bragwaine safe and sound.' And the queene was so glad of his proffer that sodainly unadvised she graunted all his asking. 'Well, madame,' said sir Palomides, 'I trust to your promise, and if yee will abide here but halfe an houre, I shall bring her unto you.' Then sir Palomides rode foorth his way unto the nunry, and lightly he came againe with dame Bragwaine, but by her good will would not have come againe, because for love of the queene she stood in adventure of her life. And when the queene Isoud saw her, she was passing glad. 'Now, madame,' said sir Palomides, 'thinke upon your promise, for I have fulfilled my promise.' 'Sir Palomides,' said the queene, 'I wot not what your desire is, but I will that yee wit, how be it I promised you largely, I thought none ill, nor I warne you none ill will I doe.' 'Madame,' said sir Palomides, 'as at this time yee shall not know my desire, before my lord your husband there shall yee know that I will have my desire that yee have promised me.' And therewith the queene departed, and rode home to the king, and sir Palomides rode after her. And when sir Palomides came before the king, hee said: 'Sir king, I require you, as yee be a righteous king, that yee will judge me the right.' 'Tell me the cause,' said the king, 'and yee shall have right.'

CHAP. XXIX.—*How sir Palomides demanded the queene Isoud, and how Lambegus rode after to rescue her, and of the escape of queene Isoud.*

'SIR,' said sir Palomides, 'I promised your queen Isoud for to bring againe dame Bragwaine, that she had lost, upon this covenant, that shee should grant me a boone that I would aske, and without grutching or advisement she granted mee.' 'What say yee, my lady?' said the king. 'It is as he saith, so God mee helpe,' said the queene; 'to say the sooth I promised

him his asking for love and joy that I had to see her.' 'Well, madame,' said the king, 'and if yee were hasty to grant him what boone hee would aske, I will well that yee performe your promise.' Then said sir Palomides, 'I will that yee wit that I will have your queene to leade her and governe her where as mee list.' Therwith the king stood still, and he bethought him of sir Tristram, and deemed that he would rescue her. And anone hastily king Marke answered, 'Take her with the adventures that shall fall of it.'

So the queene Isoud was set behind sir Palomides, and so rode his way. Anon king Marke sent for sir Tristram, but he could not be found, for hee was in the forrest at hunting. Then came forth a knight, his name was Lambegus, and he was a knight of sir Tristrams, and then this knight said unto him, 'My lord, sith yee have trust in my lord sir Tristram, for his sake I will ride after your queene and rescue her, or else I shall be beaten.' And then within a while sir Lambegus overtook sir Palomides, and then sir Palomides left the queen. 'What art thou?' said sir Palomides; 'art thou sir Tristram?' 'Nay,' said hee, 'I am his servant, and my name is sir Lambegus.' And then they hurled together, and sir Palomides gave sir Lambegus such a wound that he fel downe to the earth like a dead knight. Then hee looked after La beale Isoud, and shee was gone he wist not where, and wit yee well sir Palomides was never so heavy. So the queene ran into the forrest, and there she found a faire well, and therein she had thought for to have drowned her selfe.

And, as good fortune would, there came a knight to her that had a castle thereby, his name was sir Adthrepe¹. And when he found the queene in that mischiefe, he rescued her, and led her into his castle thereby. And when he wist what she was, hee said he would be avenged upon sir Palomides, and so he rode untill hee met with him, and there sir Palomides wounded him sore, and by force he made him to tell him the cause why he did bataille with him, and how he had led the queene unto his castell. 'Now bring me there,' said sir Palomides, 'or thou shalt dye of my hands.' 'Sir,' said sir Adthrepe, 'I am so wounded that I may not folow you, but ride you this way, and it shall bring you into the castle, and there within is the queene.' And then sir Palomides rode still till he came to the castle, and out at a window La beale Isoud saw sir Palomides, then shee made all the gates to be shut strongly. And when he saw he might not come within the castle, he tooke off both bridell and sadel, and put his horse to pasture, and set him selfe downe at the gate like as it had beene a man that had beene out of his wits which reckoned not of him selfe.

¹ *Sir Adthrepe*.—*Sire Adthorpe*, Caxton. It represents, no doubt, the English *At Thorpe*, which was a common name, the same as the modern Thorpe.

CHAP. XXX.—*How sir Tristram rode after sir Palomides, and how he found him and fought with him, and by the means of La beale Isoud the battaile ceased.*

NOW turne we to sir Tristram, that when he was come home and wist that La beale Isoud was gone with sir Palomides he was wroth out of measure. So anon, as he was armed and horsed, sir Tristram and Governale rode after into the forrest, and within a little while he found his knight sir Lambegus almost wounded unto death, and sir Tristram bare him to a foster, and charged him to keepe him well. And then he rode foorth, and there he found sir Adtherpe sore wounded, and he told him how the queene would have drowned herselfe and he had not beene, and how for her sake and love he had taken upon him to doe battaile with sir Palomides. 'Where is my lady?' said sir Tristram. 'Sir,' said the knight, 'shee is sure enough within my castle, and shee can hold hir within it.' 'Gramercy,' said sir Tristram, 'of your great goodnesse.' And so he rode till he came nigh to the castle; and then sir Tristram saw where sir Palomides sate at the gate sleeping, and his horse pastured fast afore him. 'Now goe thou, Governale,' said sir Tristram, 'and bid him awake and make him ready.' So Governale rode to him and said, 'Sir Palomides, arise and take to thee thy harneis;' but he was in such a study that he heard not what Governale said. So Governale came againe and told sir Tristram that he slept or else hee was mad. 'Goe thou againe,' said sir Tristram, 'and bid him arise, and tell him that I am here his mortall enemy.' So Governale rode againe, and put upon him the end of his speare, and said, 'Sir Palomides, make you ready, for wit yee well sir Tristram hoveth yonder, and sendeth you word he is your mortall enemy.' And therewith sir Palomides arose stilly without any word speaking, and gat his horse, and they hurled fast together, and there sir Tristram smote downe sir Palomides over his horse taile. So lightly sir Palomides drew his sword, and there began a strong battaile on both parties, for both they fought for the love of one lady; and thus they fought more then two houres, that well nigh for sorrow La beale Isoud sowned¹. 'Alas!' said she, 'that one I loved and yet doe, and that other I love not, yet it were great pittie that I should see sir Palomides slaine; and because he is not christned, I would bee loth that he should die a Sarasin.' And therewith she came downe, and besought sir Tristram to fight no more. 'Madame,' said sir Tristram, 'I will leave fighting at this time for your sake.' And then she said to sir Palomides, 'This shal be thy charge, thou shalt goe out of this cuntry while I am therin.'

¹ *Sowned.*—Swooned.

'I will obey to your bidding,' said sir Palomides, 'that is right sore against my will.' 'Take then thy way,' said La beale Isoud, 'unto the court of king Arthur, and there recommend me unto queene Guenever, and tell her that I send her word that there be within the land but foure lovers, that is sir Launcelot du Lake and queene Guenever, and sir Tristram de Lyones and queene Isoud.'

CHAP. XXXI.—*How sir Tristram brought queene Isoude home, and of the debate of king Marke and sir Tristram.*

AND so sir Palomides departed with great heavines. And sir Tristram tooke the queene and brought her againe to king Marke, and then was there made great joy of her homecomming. And then anon sir Tristram let fetch home sir Lambegus, his knight, from the fosters house, and it was long or he was hole, but at the last he was well recovered. But ever sir Andret, the which was nigh cosin unto sir Tristram, lay in a watch for to waite betweene sir Tristram and La beale Isoude, for to take them and slaunder them. So upon a day as sir Tristram talked with La beale Isoude in a window, and that espied sir Andret, and told it unto the king. Then king Marke tooke in his hand a sword, and came to sir Tristram, and called him false traitour, and would have smitten him. But sir Tristram was nigh him, and ranne underneth his sword, and pulled it out of his hand. And then king Marke fled, and sir Tristram folowed him, and smote upon him five or sixe strokes flatlying upon the necke, that hee made him for to fall upon his nose. And then forthwith sir Tristram went his way, and armed him, and tooke his horse and his men, and so rode into the forrest. And then king Marke called his counsaile unto him, and asked advise of his barons what was best to doe with sir Tristram. 'Sir,' said the barrons, in especiall sir Dinas the seneshall, 'wee will give you counsaile to send for sir Tristram; for of his might and his hardinesse we know no where so good a knight, but if it be sir Launcelot du Lake. And therefore, sir, I counsaile you for to take him to your good grace.' 'I will well,' said the king, 'that hee be sent for, that wee may bee friends.' And so when Tristram came unto the king, he was welcome, and no rehersall was made, and there was game and play. And then the king and the queene and sir Tristram went on hunting together.

CHAP. XXXII.—*How sir Lamoracke justed with thirtie knights, and how sir Tristram, at the request of king Marke, smote his horse downe.*

THE king and the queene made their pavylions and their tents to be pight in the forrest beside a river, and there was daily hunting and justing, for there were ever thirtie

knights ready for to just with all them that came in at that time. And there by fortune came sir Lamoracke de Galis and sir Driaunt, and there sir Driaunt justed right well, but at the last hee had a fall. And then sir Lamoracke proffred to just. And when he began, hee fared so with the thirtie knights, that there was not one of them but that hee gave him a fall, and some of them were sore hurt. 'I mervaille greatly,' said king Marke, 'what knight hee is that doth such deeds of armes.' 'Sir,' said sir Tristram, 'I know him for a noble knight as few now bee living, and his name is sir Lamoracke de Galis.' 'It were great shame,' said king Marke, 'that hee should goe thus away, unlesse that some other of you meete with him better.' 'Sir,' said sir Tristram, 'mee thinketh it were no worship for a noble man for to have to doe with him, in so much as he and his horse are weary both, for the deeds of armes that hee hath done this day; and they be well considered, it were enough for the noble knight sir Launcelot du Lake.' 'As for that,' said king Marke, 'I require you as yee love me and my lady the queene, take your armes and just with sir Lamoracke de Galis.' 'Sir,' said sir Tristram, 'yee bid me doe a thing that is against knighthood, for my horse and I be fresh both, and so is not his horse and he; but because I will not displease you, as ye require me so will I doe and obey your commandement.' And sir Tristram armed him anon, and tooke his horse and put him forth, and there sir Lamoracke met with him right mightily, and what with the might of his owne speare and of sir Tristrams speare, sir Lamorackes horse fell to the earth, and he sitting in the sadell. And so anon as lightly as hee might he avoided the sadell and his horse, and put his shield afore him and drew his sword, and then he said to sir Tristram, 'Alight, thou knight, and thou darest.' 'I will not,' said sir Tristram, 'and wit yee well my name is sir Tristram de Lioness, and well I know thou art sir Lamoracke de Galis; and this that I have done to thee was against my will, but I was required thereto, but I will have no more to doe with thee, for me shameth of that I have done.' 'As for the shame,' said sir Lamoracke, 'on thy part or on mine beare thou it and thou wilt, for though a mares son hath failed me, now a queenes sonne shall not faile thee; and therefore if thou be such a knight as men call thee, I require thee alight and fight with me.' 'Sir Lamoracke,' said sir Tristram, 'I understand your heart is great, and therefore I will not have to doe with you, for me forethinketh¹ of what I have done.' 'As for that,' said sir Lamoracke, 'I shall quite you and I see my time.'

¹ *Me forethinketh.*—I repent.

CHAP. XXXIII.—*How sir Lamoracke sent an horne to king Marke, in despite of sir Tristram, and how sir Tristram was driven into a chappell.*

SO he departed from him with sir Driaunt, and by the way they met with a knight that was sent from Morgan le Faye to king Arthur, and this knight had a faire horne¹, all garnished with gold, and the horne had such a vertue that there might no lady nor gentlewoman drinke of that horne but if she were true to her husband, and if shee were false shee should spill all the drinke. And because of queene Guenever, and in the despite of sir Launcelot du Lake, this horne was sent unto king Arthur, and by force sir Lamoracke made that knight to tell all that cause why he bare that horne. And then said sir Lamoracke unto the knight: 'Now shalt thou beare that horne unto king Marke, or else choose thou to die for it; for I tell thee plainly that, in the despite and reproofe of sir Tristram, thou shalt beare that horne unto king Marke his unkle. And say thou unto him that I send it him for to assay his lady, and if that she be true unto him he shall prove her.' So the knight went his way unto king Marke, and brought him that rich horne, and told him that sir Lamoracke de Galis sent it him, and thereto he told him the vertue of that horne. And then the king made La beale Isoud his queene to drinke thereof, and an hundred ladies moe, and there were but foure ladies of all those that dranke cleane. 'Alas!' said king Marke, 'this is a greate despite,' and so swore a great othe that the queene should be brent, and all the other ladies also. Then the barons gathered them together, and said plainly they would not have all the ladies brent for an horne made by sorcerie, that came from as false a sorceresse and witch as then was any living. Also sir Tristram was passing wroth that sir Lamoracke sent that horne unto king Marke. And then alwaies sir Tristram used for to goe to queene Isoud when he might; and ever sir Andret his cosin watched him night and day for to take him with La beale Isoud. And so sir Andret his cosin espied the houre and the time when sir Tristram went to his lady. And then sir Andret gat unto him twelve knights, and set upon sir Tristram secretly and sodainely, and there sir Tristram was taken with the queene, and bound hand and foote, and so was he kept untill day. And then, by the assent of king Marke, sir Tristram was led unto a chappell which stood upon the sea rockes, and there for to

¹ *A faire horne*.—This incident of the enchanted horn was a very popular story in the Middle Ages, and was made the subject of separate lays and ballads; but it is always represented as happening at the court of king Arthur, where queen Guenever became the first victim. Our text is an ingenious adaptation, which saves the honour of king Arthur's court at the expense of that of king Mark. The old French *Lai du Corn*, by the trouvère Robert Biker, and a longer German poem on the same subject, are printed in Ferdinand Wolf's learned and valuable work, *Über die Lais*, Heidelberg, 1841.

take his judgement; so he was led and bound with fortie knights. And when sir Tristram saw there was none other remedy, but that needs he must die, then said he unto them all: 'Faire lords, remember what I have done for the countrey of Cornewaile, and in what jeopardy I have beene in for the weale of you all. For when I fought for the truage of Cornewaile with sir Marhaus the good knight, I was promised to be better rewarded.' 'Fie upon thee!' said sir Andret, 'false traytour that thou art with thy vaunting; for all thy boast that thou makest yet shalt thou die this day.' Then sir Andret drew his sword, and would have slaine him. When sir Tristram saw him make such countenance, hee looked upon both his hands that were fast bound unto two knights, and sodainely hee pulled them both to him and unwrast his hands, and then he lept unto his cosin Andret, and tooke his sworde out of his hands, and then he smote sir Andret that hee fell downe to the earth, and so sir Tristram fought untill he had slaine ten knights. And then sir Tristram gat the chappell, and kept it mightily. Then the cry was great, and the people drew fast to sir Andret, more then an hundred. When sir Tristram saw the people draw unto him, hee shut fast the chappell doore, and brake the barres of a window, and so he lept out and fell upon the craggess in the sea.

CHAP. XXXIV.—*How sir Tristram was holpen by his men, and of queene Isoud which was put in a lazar-coate, and how sir Tristram was hurt.*

SO when they were departed, Governale and sir Lambegus and sir Sentraile de Lushon, which were sir Tristrams men, sought their maister. And on the rockes they found him, and with towels they pulled him up; and then sir Tristram asked them where La beale Isoud was, for hee wend shee had beene led away by sir Andrets people. 'Sir,' said Governale, 'she is put in a lazar-coate'. 'Alas!' said sir Tristram, 'that is a full ungodly place for such a faire lady, and, if I may, she shall not be there long.' And then anon sir Tristram tooke his men, and went where as La beale Isoud was, and fetcht her away, and brought her into a forrest to a faire mannor, and there sir Tristram abode with her. So the good knight bad his men to goe from him. So they departed all save Governale. And so upon a day sir Tristram went into the forrest for to desport him, and then it hapned that he fell there on sleepe. And it

¹ *A lazar-coate.*—The cottage of a lazar or leper. The lazars were compelled to live apart from other people, and there was usually a hospital for them a little distance outside a town. Sometimes they lived in mud cots or hovels in solitary places, near roads, where they might obtain charity from travellers. Such appears to have been the cot in the wood in which queen Isoude was put.

fortuned there came a man that sir Tristram afore had slaine his brother; and when this man had found him, he shot him through the shoulder with an arrow. And therewith sir Tristram leapt up, and slew that man. And in the meane while it was told to king Marke how sir Tristram and La beale Isoud were in the foresaid mannor, and as soone as hee might, thither he came with many good knights, to have slaine sir Tristram. And when he came there he was gone, and then he took La beale Isoud home with him, and kept her so strait that by no meanes shee might never wit nor send unto sir Tristram, nor he unto her. Then when sir Tristram came toward the old mannor, he found the trace of many horses, and thereby he thought well that his lady was gone. And then sir Tristram was sore displeased, and endured with great paine long time, for the arrow that he was hurt withall was envenomed.

Then, by the meanes of La beale Isoud, a lady that was cosin unto dame Bragwaine came unto sir Tristram, and told him that hee might not be hole by no meanes, 'for thy lady La beale Isoud may not helpe thee, therefore she biddeth you in all the hast to goe into Britaine to king Howell, and there yee shall find his daughter Isoud le blaunch Mains, and she shall helpe you.' Then sir Tristram and Governale sailed into Britaine. And when king Howell wist that it was sir Tristram, hee was right glad of him. 'Sir,' said sir Tristram, 'I am come into this countrey for to have helpe of your daughter, for it is tolde me that there is none other that may helpe me but shee.' And so within a while she healed him.

CHAP. XXXV.—*How sir Tristram served in warre king Howell of Britaine, and slew his adversary in the felde.*

THERE was an earle which hight Grip, and this earle made great war upon king Howell of Britaine, and besieged him. And upon a time sir Kay Hedijs, that was sonne to king Howell, as he issued out he was sore wounded to the death. Then Governale went unto the king and said, 'Sir, I counsaile you to desire my lord sir Tristram as in your need for to helpe you.' And so king Howell went unto sir Tristram, and prayed him in his warres for to helpe him. Then sir Tristram issued out of the towne with such fellowship as he could make, and did there such deeds that all Britaine spake of him. And then at the last, he slew the earle Grip, and more than an hundred knights that same day. Then king Howell embraced him in his armes, and said, 'Sir Tristram, all my kingdome will I resigne unto you.' 'God defend it,' said sir Tristram, 'for I am beholding unto you for your daughters sake to doe for you.' Then there grew great love betweene Isoud le blaunch Mains and sir Tristram. And for because that sir Tristram had such cheere

and riches, and all other pleasaunces that he had, hee had almost forsaken La beale Isoud. And so upon a time sir Tristram agreed to wed Isoud le blaunch Mains, and so at the last they were wedded and solemnly held their mariage. In the meane while there was a knight in Britaine, his name was sir Suppinabiles, and he came over the sea into England, and then he came unto the court of king Arthur, and there he met with sir Launcelot du Lake, and told him of the mariage of sir Tristram. And then said sir Launcelot, 'Fye upon him, untrue knight to his lady, but say to him, that of all knights in the world I loved him most, and let him wit the love betweene him and me is done for ever, and I give him warning from this day forth to be his mortall enemy.'

CHAP. XXXVI.—*How sir Suppinabiles told sir Tristram how he was defamed in the court of king Arthur, and of sir Launcelot du Lake.*

THEN departed sir Suppinabiles for to goe againe into Britaine, and there he found sir Tristram, and tolde him that he had beene in king Arthurs court. Then said sir Tristram, 'Heard yee anything of me?' 'So God me helpe,' said sir Suppinabiles, 'there I heard sir Launcelot speake of you great shame, and that yee be a false knight to your lady, and he bad me to doe you to wit that he will be your mortall enemy in every place hee may meete you.' 'That me repenteth,' said sir Tristram, 'for of all knights I loved to be in his fellowship.' So sir Tristram made great mone, and was ashamed that noble knights should defame him for his ladies sake.

So leave we sir Tristram in Britaine, and speake we of sir Lamoracke de Galis, that as he sailed, his ship fell on a rocke and perished, all save sir Lamorake, and fishers of the ile of Servage tooke him up. And the lord of that ile hight sir Naban le Noyre, which was a great mighty gyant. And this sir Naban hateth all the knights of king Arthur; and these fishers told sir Lamorake how there came never knight of king Arthurs but sir Naban destroyed him. And at the last battaile that he did was slaine sir Nanowne le Petite, the which he put unto a right shamefull death in despite of king Arthur, for he was drawen limmeal¹. 'That forethinketh² me sore,' said sir Lamorake, 'for that knights death, for hee was my cosin, and if I were at mine ease as well as ever I was, I would revenge his death.' 'Peace,' said the fishers, 'and make here no words, for or yee depart from hence sir Naban must know that yee have beene heere, or else wee should dye for his sake.'

¹ *Limmeal*.—i.e. one limb from another.

² *Forethinketh*.—Repenteth.

CHAP. XXXVII.—*How sir Tristram and his wife arrived in Wales, and how he met there with sir Lamorake.*

NOW turne we againe unto sir Tristram, that upon a day he tooke a little barge and his wife Isoud la blaunch Mains, with sir Kay Hedijs her brother, to play them in the coasts. And there arose a wind that drove them into the coast of Wales, upon the ile of Servage where as sir Lamoracke was, and there the barge all to-roved¹, and there dame Isoud was hurt. And they gat into the forrest, and there by a well hee saw sir Segwarides and a damosell, and then either saluted other. 'Sir,' said sir Segwarides, 'I know you for sir Tristram de Lioness, the man that I have most cause to hate in the world; but as for that, I will never hate a noble knight for a light lady, and therefore I pray you be my friend, and I will be your man unto my power; for wit yee well yee are hard bested in this valey, and we have enough to doe either of us to succour other.' And then sir Segwarides brought sir Tristram unto a lady thereby that was borne in Cornewaile, and shee told him all the perils of that valey, and how there came never knight but hee was taken prisoner or slaine. So then one told him there was a knight of king Arthurs that was wracked on the rockes. 'I pray you,' said sir Tristram, 'that ye may bring him hither that I may see him, and if he be any of the knights of king Arthur I shall know him.' Then the lady prayed the fishers to bring him to her place.

So on the morrow early they brought him thither in a fishers rayment. And as soone as sir Tristram saw him, hee smiled upon him and knew him well, but hee knew not sir Tristram. 'Faire knight,' said sir Tristram, 'mee seemeth by your cheere ye have beene diseased but late, and also me thinketh I should know you heretofore.' 'Well,' said sir Lamorake, 'sith yee have said so largely to me, my name is sir Lamorake de Galis, son unto king Pellinore.' 'For sooth I trow well,' said sir Tristram; 'for and yee had said otherwise. I knew the contrary.' 'What are yee,' said sir Lamorake, 'that knoweth me?' 'I am sir Tristram de Lyones.' 'Ah! sir, remember yee not of the fall yee gave me once, and after yee refused me to fight on foote?' 'That was not for feare I had of you,' said sir Tristram, 'but me shamed at that time to have more adoe with you, for me seemed yee had enough; but, sir Lamorake, for my kinnesse yee put many ladies to a reproofe, when yee sent the horne from Morgan le Fay to king Marke, where as yee did this in despite of me.' 'Well,' said he, 'and it were to doe againe so would I doe, for I had leaver strife and debate fell in king Markes court rather then in king Arthurs court, for the honour of both courts be not like.' 'As to that,' said sir Tris-

¹ *To-roved*.—Split to pieces.

tram, 'I know well. But yee shall leave your malice, and so will I, and let us assay how we may winne worship betweene you and mee upon this gyant sir Naban le Noyre, that is lord of this iland, for to destroy him.'

CHAP. XXXVIII.—*How sir Tristram fought with sir Naban, and overcame him, and made sir Segwarides lord of the ile.*

IN the meane time came word that sir Naban had made a cry that all the people of that ile should bee at the castle the first day after; and on the same day the son of Naban should be made a knight, and all the knights of that valey and thereabout should be there for to just, and all they of the realme of Logris¹ should be there for to just with them of North Wales. And thither came five hundred knights, and they of the country brought there sir Lamoracke, sir Tristram, sir Kay Hedijs, and sir Segwarides, for they durst not other wise doe. And then sir Naban lent sir Lamoracke horse and armour at sir Lamorackes desire, and sir Lamoracke justed and did such deeds of armes, that Naban and all the people said that there was never knight that ever they saw doe such deeds of armes. Then sir Naban proffered to play with him his play, 'for I saw never no knight doe so much upon one day.' 'I will well,' said sir Lamorake, 'play as I may, but I am weary and sore bruised.' And there either gate a speare, but sir Naban would not encounter with sir Lamorake, but smite his horse in the forehead and slew him, and there began a strong battaile on foote. But sir Lamorake was so sore bruised and short breathed that he traced and traversed somewhat abacke. 'Faire fellow,' said sir Naban, 'hold thy hands, and I shall shew thee more courtesie then ever I shewed knight, because I have seene this day thy noble knighthood, and therefore stand thou by, and I will wit whether one of thy fellowes will have to doe with me.' Then said sir Tristram, 'Looke yee play well, or else peradventure I shall learne thee a new play.' 'That is wel said, fellow,' said Naban. So when sir Tristram was armed as him liked best, and well shielded and sworded, he dressed to him on foote. for well he knew that sir Naban would not abide a strooke with a speare, therefore hee would slay every knights horse. So then they fought long on foote without any rest; and at last sir Tristram slew sir Naban, and so forthwith hee leapt to his sonne and strooke off his head. And then all the country said they would hold of sir Tristram. 'Nay,' said sir Tristram, 'I will not so, for heere is a worshipfull knight sir Lamorake de Galis, that for mee hee shall be lord of this country, for he hath done heere great deeds of armes.' 'Nay,' said sir Lamorake, 'I will not be

¹ *Logris*.—Loegria was the Welsh name for the part of Britain occupied by the Saxons.

lord of this countrey, for I have not deserved it as well as yee, therefore give it where yee will, for I will none thereof.'

So it was given to sir Segwarides, and so was he lord and worshipfully he ruled it. And then sir Segwarides delivered all the prisoners, and set good governance in that valey; and so he returned into Cornewaile, and told king Marke and La beale Isoud how sir Tristram had advanced him to the ile of Servage. But full woe was La beale Isoud when she heard tell that sir Tristram was wedded to Isoude le blanche Mains.

CHAP. XXXIX.—*How sir Lamorake departed from sir Tristram, and how he met with sir Frol, and after with sir Launcelot.*

SO sir Lamorake tooke his leave, and rode toward king Arthurs court, and sir Tristram and his wife and Kay Hedijs tooke a vessell and sailed into Britaine unto king Howell, where he was welcome. Now turne wee to sir Lamorake, that when he was departed from sir Tristram, he rod out of the forrest till he came unto an hermitage. When the hermit saw him, he asked him from whence he came. Sir Lamorake said, 'I came from this valey.' 'Sir,' said he, 'therefore I greatly mervaile, for this twenty winters I saw never no knight passe this countrey, but hee was either slaine or villainously wounded, or passed as a poore prisoner.' 'Those evill customes,' said sir Lamorake, 'are fordone', for sir Tristram slew your lord sir Naban and his son.' So on the morrow sir Lamorake departed. And as hee rod he saw foure knights fight against one, and that one knight defended him well, but at the last the foure knights had him downe. And then sir Lamorake went betweene them, and asked them why they would slay that one knight, and said, 'it was shame for foure against one.' 'Thou shalt well wit,' said the foure knights, 'that he is false; and if king Arthur were here himselfe, it would not lye in his power to save his life.' 'That is too much,' said sir Lamorake, 'but many speake more behind him then they will say to his face, and yee shall understand that I am one of the simplest of king Arthurs court, in the worship of my lord now doe your part, and in despite of you I will rescue him.' And then they lashed all at once to sir Lamorake, but anon at two strooks sir Lamorake slew two of them, and then the other two fled.

Then sir Lamorake turned againe to that knight, and demanded his name. 'Sir knight,' said he, 'my name is sir Frol of the out iles.' Then hee rode with sir Lamorake, and bare him company. And as they rode by the way, they saw a seemely knight that came riding against them, and all in white. 'Ah!' said sir Froll, 'yonder knight justed lately with me, and smote me downe from my horse, and therefore I will

¹ *Fordone*.--Undone; abolished.

just with him.' And then hee cryed on him and said, 'Sir knight, make thee ready to just.' Then the white knight overthrew sir Froll, and he rode his way a soft pace. Then sir Lamorake rode after him, and prayed him to tell him his name, 'for mee seemeth yee should be of the fellowship of the round table.' 'Upon a covenant,' said hee, 'I will tell you my name, so that yee will not discover my name, and also that yee will tell mee yours.' Then said he, 'My name is sir Lamorake de Galis.' 'And my name is Lancelot du Lake.' Then they put up their swords and kissed heartily together, and either made great joy of other. Then said sir Launcelot, 'I am in a quest that I must doe myselve alone.' Then sir Lamorake came to sir Froll, and horsed him againe. 'What knight is that?' said sir Froll. 'Sir,' said hee, 'it is not for you to know, nor it is no point of my charge.' 'Yee are the most uncurtuious,' said sir Froll, 'therefore will I depart from you.' So they departed.

CHAP. XL.—*How sir Lamorake slew sir Froll, and of the covetous¹ fighting with sir Belleance his brother.*

THEN within two or three dayes sir Lamorake found a knight at a well sleeping, and a lady sat with him and waked. Right so came sir Gawaine, and tooke the knights lady, and set her up behind his squire. So sir Lamorake rode after sir Gawaine, and said to sir Gawaine, 'Turne againe.' And then said sir Gawaine, 'What will yee doe with me? for I am nephew to king Arthur.' 'Sir,' said hee, 'for that cause I will spare you, or else that lady should abide with me, or else yee should just with mee.' Then sir Gawaine turned him, and ranne to him that ought² the lady with his speare. But the knight with pure might smote downe sir Gawaine, and tooke his lady with him. All this sir Lamorake saw, and said to himselfe, 'But and I revenge my fellow, he will say dishonour of me in king Arthurs court.' So sir Lamorake returned and proffered that knight to just. 'Sir,' said hee, 'I am ready.' And so they came together with all their might, and there sir Lamorake smote the knight through both sides, that he fell downe dead to the ground. Then the lady rode to that knights brother, that hight sir Belleaunce le Orgulus, that dwelled fast thereby, and then she told him how his brother was slaine. 'Alas!' said hee, 'I will bee revenged.' And so armed him, and mounted on horsebacke, and within a while he overtooke sir Lamorake, and bad him turne and leave the lady. So they rode together, and unhorsed each other, and dressed their shields and drew their swords, and fought mightily two houres long, as two mighty knights. Then sir Belleaunce prayed him

¹ *Covetous.*—Greedy; eager.

² *Ought.*—Owned.

to tell him his name. 'Sir,' said he, 'my name is sir Lamorake de Galis.' 'Ah!' said sir Belleaunce, 'thou art the same that I most hate in the world, for now thou hast slaine my brother sir Froll. Alas! how should I bee accorded with thee, therefore defend thee, for thou shalt dye, there is none other remedy.' Then they dressed them againe to battaile, and either wounded other sore, that all the ground was bloody where as they fought. And at the last sir Belleaunce withdrew him backe, and sat him downe softly upon a little hill, for hee was so faint for bleeding that hee might not stand. Then sir Lamorake threw his shield upon his backe, and asked him, 'What cheere?' 'Well,' said sir Belleaunce. 'Ah, sir, yet shall I shew you favour in your disease¹.' And then sir Lamorake kneeled downe and unlaced first his umberere², and then his owne; and then either kissed other with weeping teares. Then sir Lamorake led sir Belleaunce unto an abbey fast by, and there sir Lamorake would not depart from sir Belleaunce till he was hole. And then they swore together that none of them should never fight more one against the other. So sir Lamorake departed, and went unto the court of king Arthur.

CHAP. XLI.—*How a younge man came into the court of king Arthur, and how sir Kay called him in scorne La-cote-male-tailé.*

THERE came into the court of king Arthur a young man and a big made, and he was richly beseene, and he desired to be made knight of king Arthur; but his over garment sate overthwartly³, how bee it it was good and rich cloth of gold. 'What is your name?' said king Arthur. 'Sir,' said the young man, 'my name is Brewnor le Noyre, and within short space yee shall know that I am come of good kin.' 'It may well bee,' said sir Kay the seneshall, 'but in mockage⁴, yee shall be called La-cote-male-tailé, that is as much to say, the evill shapen coate.' 'It is a great thing that thou askest,' said the king; 'and for what cause wearest thou that rich coate? tell mee, for I can well thinke for some cause it is.' 'Sir,' said he, 'I had a father a noble knight, and upon a day as he rode on hunting, it hapned him for to lay him downe to sleepe. And there came a knight that had beene long his enemy; and when he saw he was fast on sleepe hee all to-hewed⁵ him, and this same coate had my father on the same time, and that maketh this coate to fit so evill upon me, for the strookes be on it as I found it, and never

¹ *Disease*.—*Male-ease*, Caxton. Uneasiness; discomfort.

² *Umbere*.—The moveable part of the helmet which shaded or covered the knight's face.

³ *Overthwartly*.—Awry; crosswise.

⁴ *Mockage*.—Mockery.

⁵ *To-hewed*.—Hewed to death.

shall bee amended for mee. Thus, to have my fathers death in remembrance, I weare this coate till I be revenged. And because yee are called the most noble king of the world, I came to you that yee would make me knight.' 'Sir,' said sir Lamorake and sir Gaheis, 'it were well done to make him knight, for him beseemeth well of person and of countenance that he shall prove a good man, and as yee bee remembered even such one was sir Launcelot du Lake, when he came first into this court.' 'That is truth,' said king Arthur, 'and to morrow at your request I shall make him knight.' So on the morrow there was an hart found, and thither rode king Arthur with a company of knights to sley the hart. And this young man that sir Kay named La-cote-male-tailé was there left behind with queene Guenever; and there was a mighty lyon kept in a strong towre of stone¹, and it happened that this lyon brake loose, and came hurling after the queene and her knights. And when the queene saw the lyon, she cried and fled, and prayed her knights to rescue her, and there was none of them all but twelve that abode, and all the other fled. Then said La-cote-male-taylé, 'Now I see well that all coward knights be not dead.' And therewith he drew out his sword, and dressed him before the lyon. And he smote him on the middest of the head such a mighty stroke, that he clove it in sunder, and so the lyon fell downe dead. With that king Arthur came home, and, when the queene told him of that adventure, he was well pleased; and then the king forthwith made him knight. 'Now, sir,' said this young knight, 'I require you and all the knights of your court, that yee call me by none other name but La-cote-male-tailé, in so much as sir Kay hath named me so, and so will I be called.'

CHAP. XLII.—*How a damosell came unto king Arthurs court and desired a knight to take on him an enquest, which La-cote-male-tailé enterprised.*

THEN on the same day there came a damosell into the kings court, and shee brought with her a great blacke shield, with a white hand in the middest holding a sword. 'Sir,' said the damosell to king Arthur, 'I have ridden long and many a day with this blacke shield, and for this cause I am come unto your court. The knight which ought this shield was sore wounded and saw there was none other way but that he must die, and then he commanded me to beare this shield unto the court of king Arthur, he requiring and praying some good knight to take this shield, and that he would fulfill the quest that he was in.' 'Now what say yee unto the quest,' said king

¹ *A mighty lyon.*—The keeping of lions and other wild beasts is alluded to from time to time in the mediæval romances, and is the subject of frequent traditions connected with old castles. The incident here related is exactly identical with one in the life of Hereward the Saxon.

Arthur, 'is there any of you here that will take upon him for to weld¹ this blacke shield?' Then sir Kay tooke the blacke^{*} shield in his hand. 'Sir knight,' said the damosell, 'what is your name?' 'Wite yee well,' said he, 'my name is sir Kay the seneshall, that well is knowne in many places.' 'Sir,' said the damoisell, 'lay downe that shield, for wit yee well it falleth not for you², for hee must bee a better knight then yee that shall weld this shield.' Then spake the knight sir La-cote-male-tailé: 'Faire damosell, I will take upon me that blacke shield and that adventure, so that I may know whetherward my journey should bee!' 'What is your name, faire young knight?' said the damosell. 'My name is,' said hee, 'sir La-cote-male-tailé.' 'Well may yee be called so,' said the damosell, 'the knight with the evill shapen coate, but and thou bee so hardy to take upon thee to beare that blacke shield and to follow mee, wit thou well thy skinne shall bee as well hewen as thy coate.' And therewith came into the court two squires, and brought him a great horse and his armour, with his speare, and anon hee was armed and tooke his leave. Then the damosell departed, and sir La-cote-male-tailé followed fast after, and within a while he overtooke the damosell. And anon shee missaid him in the foulest manner³.

CHAP. XLIII.—*How sir La-cote-male-tailé overthrew sir Dagonet, king Arthurs foole, and of the rebuke that he had of the damosell.*

AND then sir Kay in all hast made sir Dagonet, king Arthurs foole, to be armed and horsed, and bad him follow sir La-cote-male-tailé, and proffer him to just; and so he did, and when hee saw sir La-cote-male-tailé, he cryed to him, and bad him make him ready to just. So sir La-cote-male-tailé smot sir Dagonet over his horse croup. Then the damosell mocked sir La-cote-male-tailé, and said, 'Fie for shame, now thou art shamed in king Arthurs court, when they send a foole to have to doe with thee, and specially at the first justs.' Thus she rode long chiding him. And within a while there came sir Bleoberis the good knight, and there he justed with sir La-cote-male-tailé, and there sir Bleoberis smote him so sore that horse and all fell to the earth. Then sir La-cote-male-tailé arose up lightly and dressed his shield and drew his sword, and would have done the bataille to the uttermost, for hee was wood wroth. 'Not so,' said sir Bleoberis, 'as at this time I will not fight on foote.' Then the damosell Maledisaunt rebuked him in the foulest manner. So thus hee rode with her two dayes, and by

¹ Weld.—Carry.

² Falleth not for you.—This is corrected from the text of Caxton. The text of 1634 has, *it falleth not you.*

³ The foulest manner.—It may be remarked that this story of La-cote-male-tailé resembles rather closely that of sir Gareth in the former part of this romance.

fortune there came sir Palomides and encountred with him, and he in the same wise served him as sir Bleoberis had done before. 'What doest thou here in my fellowship?' said the damosell Maledisaunt; 'thou canst not sit no knight, nor withstand him a buffet, and if it were sir Dagonet.' 'Ah, faire damosell, I am not the worse to take a fall of sir Palomides, and yet great disworship have I none, for neither sir Bleoberis nor yet sir Palomides would not doe battaile with me on foote.' So in the meane while there came sir Mordred, sir Gawains brother, and so he fell in the company of the damosell Maledisaunt, and they came before the castle Orgulus; and there came out of the castle two knights against them, and sir Mordred justed with the formost, and the knight of the castle smote sir Mordred downe off his horse. And then anon sir La-cote-male-tailé justed with that other knight, and either of them smote other downe horse and man unto the ground. Then either of them tooke others horse. And then sir La-cote-male-tailé rode unto that knight that smote downe sir Mordred and put him from his horse to the earth as hee had beene dead. And then he turned unto him that had met him afore, and that knight tooke the flight toward the castle, and sir La-cote-male-tailé rode after him into the castle. And there sir La-cote-male-tailé pursued him so nigh that hee clave his head downe to his shoulders, and so fell downe dead to the earth¹.

CHAP. XLIV.—*How sir La-cote-male-tailé fought against an hundred knights, and how he escaped by the meanes of a lady.*

AND so anon there came an hundred knights about him, and assailed him. And when he saw that his horse should be slaine, hee alighted and dressed his backe to a ladies chamber wall, thinking himselfe that hee had leaver die there with worship then to abide the rebukes of the damosell Maledisaunt. And in the meane time as hee stood and fought, that lady whose the chamber was went out slily at a posterne, and without the gates she found sir La-cote-male-tailés horse, and lightly shee gat him by the bridell and tied him to the posterne. And then shee went unto her chamber slily againe, to behold how that one knight fought against an hundred knights. And so when shee had beholden him long, she went to a window behind his backe, and said, 'Thou, knight, fightest wonderous well, but for all that at the last thou must needs die, but and thou canst through thy mighty prowesse winne to yonder posterne, for there have I fastened thy horse for to abide thee.' When sir La-cote-male-tailé heard her say so, hee tooke his sword and put his shield

¹ *And there . . . to the earth.*—This sentence is not in Caxton's text, which says merely, *and there La-cote-male-tailé slawe hym.*

before him, and hurled through the thickest of them. And when he came to the posterne, he found there foure knights ready, and at two of the first strookes he slew two of the knights, and the other two fled, and so he wanne his horse and rode from them. And in the meane while the damosell said unto sir Mordred, 'I weene my foolish knight bee either slaine or taken prisoner.' Then were they ware where hee came riding. And when he was come unto them, he told them how hee had sped and escaped in despite of them all, 'and some of the best of them will tell no tales.' 'Thou lvest falsly,' said the damosell, 'that dare I make good, but as a foole and a dastard to all knighthood they have let thee passe.' With that shee sent a currou¹ of hers, that rode alway with her, to know the truth of this deed. And so he rode thither lightly, and asked how and in what manner that sir La-cote-male-tailé was escaped out of that castle. Then all the knights cursed him, and said, 'Hee is a fiend and no man, for hee hath slaine heere twelve of our best knights, and wee wend unto this day that it had bene overmuch for sir Lancelot du Lake, or for sir Tristram de Lyones. And in despite of us all he is departed from us.' With this answer the currou departed, and came againe unto the damosell Maledisaunt his lady, and told her all together how that sir La-cote-male-tailé had sped at the castle Orgulus. And then shee let fall downe her head, and said but little. Here leave we off a while of this tale, and speake we of sir Launcelot du Lake.

CHAP. XLV.—*How sir Lancelot came to the court and heard of sir La-cote-male-tailé, and how he followed after him, and how sir La-cote-male-tailé was prisoner.*

AND when he was come to the court of king Arthur, then he heard tell of the young knight sir La-cote-male-tailé, how hee slew the lyon, and also how he tooke upon him the adventure of the blacke shield, the which was named at that time the hardiest adventure of the world. 'So God me helpe,' said sir Lancelot unto many of his fellowes, 'it is shame to all you noble knights to suffer such a young knight to take such an adventure upon him for his destruction.' Then many knights were sorry that sir La-cote-male-tailé was gone to that adventure. 'Truly,' said sir Launcelot, 'I cast me to ride after him.' And within seaven dayes sir Launcelot overtooke sir La-cote-male-tailé, and then he saluted him and the damosell Maledisaunt. And when sir Mordred saw sir Launcelot, he left their fellowship. And so sir Launcelot rode with them all the day, and ever the damosell Maledisaunt rebuked sir La-cote-male-tailé

¹ *Currou*.—Literally, a runner. An errand-boy or messenger.

full uncurteously. And then sir Launcelot answered for him. And then shee left off sir La-cote-male-tailé, and rebuked sir Launcelot. So this meane while sir Tristram de Lyones sent by a damosell a letter unto sir Launcelot, in excusing him of the wedding of the faire damosell Isoude le blaunch Mains, and passing curteously and gentilly sir Tristram wrote unto sir Launcelot, alway beseeching him to bee his good friend unto La beale Isoud of Cornewaile, and that sir Launcelot would excuse him, if so were that he saw her. And within short time, by the grace of God, said sir Tristram, he would speake with La beale Isoud, and with him right hastily. Then sir Launcelot departed from the damosell and from sir La-cote-male-tailé, for to oversee that letter, and for to write another letter unto sir Tristram de Liones. And in the meane while sir La-cote-male-tailé rode with the damosell untill they came unto a castle which hight Pendragon¹, and there they saw standing before them six knights, and one of them proffered to just with sir La-cote-male-tailé.

And there sir La-cote-male-tailé smot him over his horse croup. And after that the five knights set upon him all at once with their speares, and there they smote sir La-cote-male-tailé downe horse and man, and tooke him prisoner, and so led him unto the castle and kept him as prisoner. And on the morrow sir Launcelot arose and delivered the damosel with letters unto sir Tristram, and then hee tooke his way after sir La-cote-male-tailé, and by the way upon a bridge there was a knight that proffred sir Launcelot to just; and so at the last sir Launcelot smote him downe groveling upon his hands and knees, and then that knight yeelded him. 'Sir,' said the knight, 'I require you tell mee your name, for my heart giveth much unto you.' 'Nay,' said sir Launcelot, 'as at this time I will not tell you my name, unlesse that yee will tel me your name.' 'Certainly,' said the knight, 'my name is sir Neroveus, that was made knight of my lord sir Launcelot du Lake.' 'Ah! Neroveus de Lyle,' said sir Launcelot, 'I am right glad that yee are proved a good knight, for wit yee well now my name is sir Launcelot du Lake.' 'Alas!' said Neroveus de Lyle, 'what have I done!' And therewith he fell flatling to his feete and would have kissed them, but sir Launcelot would not let him. And then either made great joye of other. And then sir Neroveus told sir Launcelot that he should not goe to the castle Pendragon, 'and there is a lord, a mighty knight, and hath many knights with him; and this night I heard say that they tooke yesterday a knight prisoner that rode with a damosell, and they say hee is a knight of the round table.'

¹ *Pendragon*.—There are still the ruins of a castle on the banks of the river Eden, in Westmoreland, called Pendragon castle, which, according to a popular legend, was a favourite residence of king Uther Pendragon.

CHAP. XLVI.—*How sir Launcelot fought with sixe knights, and after that he fought with sir Brian, and how he delivered all the prisoners.*

‘IN good faith,’ said sir Launcelot, ‘that knight is my fellow, and him shall I rescew, or else I shall leese my life for him.’ And therewith he rode forth untill he came before the castle of Pendragon, and anon there came sixe knights, and all made them ready to set upon sir Launcelot at once. Then sir Launcelot feutred his speare, and smote at the formost that he brake his backe in sunder, and three of them hit and three failed. And forthwith sir Launcelot rode hurling into the castle. And anon came the lord of the castle, that was called sir Brian de les Iles, which was a noble man, and was a great enemy unto king Arthur, and then they feutred their speares and hurled together so strongly that both their horses fell to the earth. And at the last sir Launcelot gave sir Brian such a buffet that hee kneeled upon his knees, and therewith sir Brian yeelded him, and put him unto his mercy and grace. Then sir Launcelot made him to deliver all his prisoners that hee had within his castle, and therein sir Launcelot found thirty knights of king Arthurs court, and fortie ladies, and so hee delivered them and rode his way. And when sir La-cote-male-tailé was delivered, he gat his horse and his harneis, and his damosell Maledisant. The meane while sir Neroveus, that sir Lauucelot had fought withall at the bridge, sent a damosell after sir Launcelot for to wit howe he had sped at the castle of Pendragon. And then they that were within the castle mervailed what knight he was, when sir Brian and his knights delivered all those prisoners. ‘Have yee no mervaille,’ said the damosell, ‘for he is the best knight in the world that did this journey; and wit ye well,’ said she, ‘it was sir Launcelot du Lake.’ And when the damosell and sir La-cote-male-tailé understood that it was sir Launcelot that had ridden with them in fellowship, then she remembreð her how she had rebuked him, and called him coward, then was shee passing heavy and sorrowfull.

CHAP. XLVII.—*How sir Launcelot met with the damosell named Maledisaunt, and how he named her the damosell Bienpensant.*

SO then they rode forth a pace after sir Launcelot, and within two mile they overtooke him, and saluted him, and greatly they thanked him, and the damosell cried sir Launcelot mercy of her evill deeds, and said, ‘Now I know the floure of all true and loyall knighthood is departed betweene sir Tristram and you. I thanke God that I have met with you; and once at Camelot I met with sir Tristram, and there hee rescued this blacke shield with the white hands holding a naked sword, which sir Breus¹ saunce Pitie had taken away from me.’ ‘Now,

¹ *Breus.—Bruyns, Caxton.*

faire damosell,' said sir Launcelot, 'upon this covenant I will ride with you, so that yee will not rebuke this knight sir La-cote-male-tailé no more.' 'Ah! Jesu thank you,' said the damosel, 'for now I will say to you and to him both, I rebuked him never for no hate that I hated him, but for great love that I had unto him, for ever I supposed hee had beene too young and tender for to take upon him these adventures; for it may be no young knights deed that shall atcheve this adventure to the end.' 'Per dieu!' said sir Launcelot, 'it is well said, where as yee are called the damosel Maledisant, I will call you the damosel Byenpensaunt.' And so they rode foorth a great while till they came to the borders of the countrey of Sursule¹, and there they found a ful faire village with a strong bridge like a fortresse. And when sir Launcelot and they were at the bridge, there start foorth before them many gentlemen and yeomen, that said, 'Faire lords. yee may not passe over this bridge and this fortresse, because of the blacke shield that I see one of you beare, and therfore there shall not passe no one but one of you at once; therefore choose which of you shall enter within this bridge first.' Then sir Launcelot profered himselfe first to enter within this bridge.

'Sir,' said La-cote-male-tailé, 'I beseech you let me enter first within this fortresse, and if I may speede well, I will send for you, and if it happen that I be slaine, there it goeth. And if so be that I am taken prisoner, then may yee come and rescew mee.' So he entred; and anon there met with him two bretheren, that one hight sir Plaine de Force, and that other hight sir Plaine de Amours, and first sir La-cote-male-tailé smote downe sir Plaine de Force, and soone after hee smote downe sir Plaine de Amours, and then they dressed them to their shields and swords, and so they began full hard to assay sir La-cote-male-tailé, and many great wounds they gave him; but at the last hee felled them to the earth, and would have slaine them had they not yeilded them. And right so La-cote-male-tailé tooke the best horse that there was of them two, and so rode foorth his way to that other fortresse and bridge, and there he met with the third brother, whose name was sir Plenorius, a full noble knight; and there they fought two houres and more, and never rested, and ever sir Launcelot and the damosel beheld them.

CHAP XLVIII.—*How La-cote-male-tailé was taken prisoner, and after rescewed by sir Launcelot, and how sir Launcelot overcame foure bretheren.*

TIS meane while sir La-cote-male-tailé sunke downe upon the earth, for, what for wounds and what for blood, he might not stand. Then the other knight had pittie of him, and

¹ *Sursule*.—*Surluse*, Caxton.

said, 'Faure young knight, dismay you not, for if yee had beene fresh when yee met with me as I was, I know well I should not have endured so long as yee have done; and therefore, for your noble deeds and valiantnesse, I shall shew you great kindnesse and gentlenes in all that ever I may.' And foorth-with the noble knight sir Plenorius tooke him up in his armes and led him into his towre. And then he commanded him the wine, and made him for to search him and for to stop his bleeding wounds. 'Sir,' said La-cote-male-tailé, 'withdraw you from me, and hye you to yonder bridge againe, for there will meete you another manner knight than ever I was.' Then sir Plenorius heard a knight call, that said, 'Sir Plenorius, where art thou? either thou must deliver me the prisoner that thou hast led unto thy towre, or else come and doe battaile with me.' Then sir Plenorius gate his horse, and came gallopping toward sir Launcelot; and then they smote either other so mightily that their horses fell downe under them; and then they avoided their horses, and drew out their swords, and lashed together with great strokes and foynes; but ever sir Launcelot bare sir Plenorius backer and backer till he came nigh the towre gate; and then said sir Launcelot, 'I know thee well for a good knight, but wit thou well thy life and death is in my hands, and therefore yeeld thou to me and thy prisoners.' The other answered not a word, but strooke mightily upon sir Launcelots helme, that fire sprang out of his eyes; then sir Launcelot doubled his strookes so thicke, and smote at him so mightily, that hee made him to kneele upon his knees, and therewith sir Launcelot lept upon him and pulled him downe groveling. Then sir Plenorius yeelded him and his towre and all his prisoners at his will. And then sir Launcelot rode to the other bridge, and there justed with brethren of sir Plenorius, the one hight¹ sir Pillounes, and the other hight sir Pellogris, and the third hight sir Pellandris; and sir Launcelot smote them downe, and made them to yeeld them unto him, and then he returned unto sir Plenorius, and there he found in his prison king Carados of Scotland and many other knights, and all they were delivered. And sir La-cote-male-tailé came to sir Launcelot, and sir Launcelot would have given him all these fortresses and these bridges. 'Nay,' said La-cote-male-tailé, 'I will not have sir Plenorius livelihood.' 'I will well,' said sir Launcelot, 'so that hee will come to the court of king Arthur, and become his man, and his five brethren. And as for you, sir Plenorius, I will undertake,' said sir Launcelot, 'at the next feast, so there be a place voide, that ye shall be knight of the round table.' 'Sir,' said sir Plenorius, 'at the next feast of Pentecost I will be at king Arthurs court, and at that time I will be guided and ruled by king Arthur, and he be so pleased.'

¹ *Hight*.—Was called.

CHAP. XLIX.—*How sir Lancelot made La-cote-male-tailé lord of the castle of Pendragon, and after was made knight of the round table.*

AND in the meane while there came sir Kay the seneshall and sir Brandiles, and anon they fellowshipped with them. And as sir Lancelot came by the castle of Pendragon, there hee put sir Brian de les Iles from his lands, and all that castle of Pendragon, and all the lands thereof, he gave unto sir La-cote-male-tailé. And then sir Launcelot sent for sir Neroveus, that he had made once knight, and he made him to have all the rule of that castle and of the countrey under La-cote-male-tailé. And so they rode unto king Arthurs court all together. And at Pentecost next following there was sir Plenorius and also sir La-cote-male-tailé, otherwise by right called sir Brewnor le Noire, both made knights of the round table, and great lands king Arthur gave them; and there sir Brewnor le Noire wedded the damosell Maledisaunt, and after shee was called Beauvivant. But ever for the most part he was called sir La-cote-male-tailé, and he proved a passing noble knight and a mighty.

CHAP. L.—*How La beale Isoud sent letters unto sir Tristram by her maiden Bragwaine, and of divers adventures of sir Tristram.*

NOW leave we off sir La-cote-male-tailé, and turne we unto sir Tristram de Lyones that was in Britaine. When La beale Isoud understood that he was married, shee sent unto him by her maide Bragwaine as pittious letters as could be thought, and her conclusion was, that if sir Tristram would come to her court and bring with him Isoud le blaunch Mains, they should bee kept as well as she her selfe. Then sir Tristram called unto him sir Kay Hedijs, and asked him whether hee would goe with him into Cornewaile secretly. And then he let ordaine prively a little vessell, and therein went sir Tristram, Kay Hedijs, dame Bragwaine, and Governale sir Tristrams squire. So when they were in the sea, a contrarious wind blew them on the coasts of North Wales nigh the Castle Perillous. Then said sir Tristram, 'Here shall yee abide this ten dayes, and Governale my squire with you, and, if so be I come not againe by that day, take the next way into Cornewaile, for within this forrest are many strange adventures, and some of them I cast mee to prove or I depart, and when I may I shall hast me after you.' Then sir Tristram and sir Kay Hedijs tooke their horses and departed from their fellowship. And so they rode within that forrest a mile and more. And at the last sir Tristram saw before him a likely knight and a well made man, all armed, sitting by a cleere fountaine or well, and a stronge mighty horse neere unto him tied to a great oake, and a man hoving and riding by him leading an horse that was laden with speares.

And this knight that was by the well seemed by his countenance to be passing heavy. Then sir Tristram rode neere him, and said, 'Faire knight, why sit you so drouping? ye seeme for to be a knight arraunt by your armes and harneis, and therefore dresse you to just with one of us, or with both.' Therewith that knight made no words, but lightly he tooke his horse and lept upon him. So sir Kay Hediuis asked leave at sir Tristram for to just first. 'Doe your best,' said sir Tristram. So they met together, and there sir Kay Hediuis had a fall, and was sore wounded. Then sir Tristram said, 'Knight, thou hast well justed, now make thee ready to mee;' and then that knight smote downe sir Tristram from his horse, and gave him a great fall. Then sir Tristram was sore ashamed, and lightly he avoided his horse, and put his shield before him, and drew out his sword. And then sir Tristram required that knight of his knighthood to alight on foote and fight with him: and there they fought a long battaile together nigh two houres. Then sir Tristram said, 'Faire knight, hold thy hand, and tell mee of whence thou art, and what is thy name?' 'As for that,' said the knight, 'I will bee advised, but, if thou wilt tell me thy name, peradventure I will tell thee mine.'

CHAP. LI.—*How sir Tristram met with sir Lamoracke de Galis, and how they fought, and after accorded never to fight together.*

'NOW, faire knight,' said hee, 'my name is sir Tristram de Lyones.' 'Sir,' said the other knight, 'and my name is sir Lamorake de Galis.' 'Ah! sir Lamorake,' said sir Tristram, 'well bee wee met, and bethinke thee now of the despite that thou diddest to mee of the sending of the horne unto king Markes court, to the entent to have slaine or dishonoured my lady the queene La beale Isoud; and therefore wit thou well,' said sir Tristram, 'the one of us shall die or we depart.' Then sir Tristram would not make no longer delayes, and they fought long, till either were weary of other. Then sir Tristram said to sir Lamorake, 'In all my life met I never with such a knight that was so big and so well breathed as ye be; therefore,' said sir Tristram, 'it were pittie that any of us both should here be mischeved¹.' 'Sir,' said sir Lamorake, 'for your renowne I will that yee have the worship of this battaile, and therefore I will yeeld me unto you.' And therewith hee tooke the point of his sword for to yeeld him.' 'Nay, said sir Tristram, 'yee shall not doe so, for I know well your proffers are more of your gentlenesse then for feare and dread yee have of mee.' And therewith sir Tristram and sir Lamorake swore that never none of them should fight against other for weale nor for woe.

¹ *Be mischeved.*—Come to misfortune.

CHAP. LII.—*How sir Palomides followed the questing beast, and how hee smote downe both sir Tristram and sir Lamoracke with one speare.*

THIS meane while there came sir Palomides the good knight, following the questing beast¹. And right so as he followed this beast, came sir Tristram and sir Lamorake. And to make short tale, sir Palomides smote downe sir Tristram and sir Lamorake both with one speare, and so departed after the beast glatisaunt², wherefore these two knights were passing wroth that sir Palomides would not fight with them on foote. So then sir Tristram and sir Lamorake gat sir Kay Hedijs upon a shield betweene them both and led him unto a fosters³ lodge, and there they gave him in charge to keepe him well, and with him they abode three dayes and more. And then the two knights tooke their horses, and rode sundry wayes; and sir Tristram rode nigh there as sir Kay Hedijs was, and sir Lamorake rode untill he came to a chapell, and there he put his horse to pasture. And anon there came sir Meliograunce, that was king Bagdemagus sonne, and there he put his horse to pasture, and was not ware of sir Lamorake; and then this knight sir Meliograunce made his moane of the love that he had unto queene Guenever. All this heard sir Lamoracke; and on the morrow sir Lamorake tooke his horse and rode unto the forrest, and there hee met two knights hoving⁴ under the shadow of the wood⁵. 'Faire knights,' said sir Lamoracke, 'what doe yee hoving there and watching? and if yee bee knights arraunt that will just, loe I am ready.' 'Nay, sir knight,' said they, 'not so, but we lye here in awaite of sir Launcelot du Lake, which slew our brother, and if ever wee may meete with him, hee shall not escape but we shall sley him.' 'I will not beleewe that,' said sir Lamoracke, 'for I heard never yet dayes of my life of no knight but that sir Lancelot was too big for him.'

CHAP. LIII.—*How sir Lamoracke met with sir Meliograunce and fought together for the beautie of queene Guenever.*

RIGHT so sir Lamorake was ware where sir Launcelot came riding straight toward them. And sir Lamoracke rode againe there as he left the two knights, and then hee found them hid in the leved wood. 'Fie on you,' said sir Lamorake, 'false cowards, it is pittie and shame that any of you should take the high order of knighthood.' So sir Lamoracke

¹ *The questing beast*.—See before, vol. i. p. 79.

² *Glatisaunt*.—Giving tongue, like hounds; an old French synonyme for *questing*.

³ *Fosters*.—Forester's.

⁴ *Hoving*.—Halting, loitering, waiting.

⁵ *Shadow of the wood*.—*The wood shawe*, Caxton. The editor of the edition of 1634 did not understand the exact meaning of the word *shaw*, which denotes the part of the wood covered with trees, as distinguished from the open lawn.

departed, and within a while he met with sir Meliograunce, and asked him why hee loved queene Guenever as hee did, 'for I was not farre from you when yee made your complaint by the chappell.' 'Did yee so?' said sir Meliograunce, 'then will I abide it; I love queene Guenever, what will yee with it? I will prove that shee is the fairest lady in the world.' 'As to that,' said sir Lamoracke, 'I say nay thereto, for queene Morgause of Orkeney, mother unto sir Gawaine, is the fairest queene and lady that now beareth life.' And then they departed either from other in great wrath, and came running together as it had been thunder, and either smote other so mightily that their horses fell backward unto the earth. And then they avoided their horses, and dressed their shields, and drew their swords, and they fought a great while; and as they stood thus fighting, by fortune there came sir Launcelot and sir Bleoberis riding. And then anon sir Launcelot rode betweene them both, and asked them for what cause they fought so together, 'for yee are both knights of king Arthurs court.'

CHAP. LIV.—*How sir Launcelot and sir Bleoberis came riding, and found sir Lamoracke and sir Meliograunce fighting, and how sir Lamoracke justed with king Arthur.*

'SIR,' said Meliograunce, 'I shall tell you for what cause wee doe this battaile. I praised my lady queene Guenever, and said she was the fairest lady of the world, and sir Lamoracke said nay thereto, for he said that queene Morgause of Orkeney was fairer then shee and more of beautie.' 'Ah! sir Lamoracke, why sayest thou so?' said sir Launcelot. 'Sir,' said sir Lamoracke, 'though my lady queene Guenever be the fairest in your eye, wit ye well queene Morgause of Orkeney is the fairest in mine eye, and so every knight thinketh his owne lady fairest.' Then spake sir Bleoberis, and said, 'My lord sir Launcelot, sir Lamoracke saith but reason and knightly. For I warne you I have a lady, and mee thinketh she is the fairest lady of the world. And well ye wote that sir Lamoracke is as noble a knight as I know, and he hath ought you and us ever good will, and therefore I pray you bee good friends.' And then said sir Launcelot unto sir Lamoracke, 'I pray you forgive mee all mine evill will, and, if I was misadvised, I will amend it.' 'Sir,' said sir Lamoracke, 'the mends is soone made betweene you and me.' And so either departed from other. And within a while came king Arthur, and met with sir Lamoracke, and justed with him, and there hee smote downe sir Lamoracke, and wounded him sore with a speare, and so he rode from him; how be it sir Lamoracke knew not king Arthur.

CHAP. LV.—*How sir Kay mett with sir Tristram, and after of the shame spoken of the knights of Cornewaile, and how they justed.*

NOW leave we off this tale, and speake we of sir Tristram de Lyones, that as he rode he met with sir Kay the seneshal, and they rode together till they came to a bridge, and there was a knight would not let them passe, till that one of them had justed with him.

And so that knight justed with sir Kay, and gave him a fall from his horse, and that knights name was sir Tor, sir Lamo-rackes halfe brother. And then they two rode to their lodging, and there they found sir Brandiles. And sir Tor came thither anon after. And so as they sate at their supper, these foure knights, three of them spake all shame of Cornish knights; sir Tristram heard all that they said and said but litle, but at that time he discovered not his name. In the morning sir Brandiles proffred to just with sir Tristram, and so sir Tristram smote him downe horse and all to the earth. And then sir Tor le fyse de Vasher¹ encountred with sir Tristram, and there sir Tristram smote him downe from his horse. And then he rode his way, and sir Kay followed him, but he would not of his fellowship. And then sir Brandiles came to sir Kay and said, 'I would full faine know what that knights name is.' 'Come on your way with mee,' said sir Kay, 'and wee shall pray him for to tell us his name.' So they rode together untill they came nigh to him; and when he saw them come he proffered them to just. 'Nay,' said sir Brandiles, 'we justed late enough with you, wee come not to that entent. But for this we come, to require you of your knighthood for to tell us your name.' 'Faire knights, my name is sir Tristram de Lyones, nephew unto king Marke of Cornewaile.' 'Ah!' said sir Kay, 'and yee bee sir Tristram de Lyones, yee are the man now called most of prowesse, except it be sir Launcelot du Lake. For he beareth not the life christian ne heathen that can find such another knight to speak of his prowesse and of his hands, and his truth withall. For yet could there never creature say of him any dishonour, and make it good.' And thus they talked a great while, and then they departed either from other such waies as unto them seemed best.

CHAP. LVI.—*How king Arthur was brought into the forrest perillous, and how sir Tristram saved his life.*

NOW shall yee heare what the cause was that king Arthur came into the forrest perillous, that was in North Wales, by the meanes of a lady, her name was Annowre, and this lady

¹ *Vasher*.—*Vayshoure*, Caxton. See book i. pp. 101, 102.

came to king Arthur at Cardife, and she, by faire promise and faire behests, made king Arthur to ride with her to that forrest perilous, and shee was a great sorceresse, and many daies she had loved king Arthur; and shee brought him to her tower. Then when this lady Annowre saw that shee might not have king Arthur at her will, shee laboured by false meanes to have slaine him. And then the lady of the lake, that hight Nineve, knew well that king Arthur should be slaine, unlesse that he had helpe of sir Launcelot or sir Tristram, and thus she rode up and downe till she met with sir Tristram. 'O, my lord sir Tristram,' said she, 'well be yee met, for as this day and within these two houres shall bee done the foulest deede that ever was done in this land.' 'Oh, faire damosell,' said sir Tristram, 'may I amend it.' 'Come on with mee,' saith shee, 'and that in all the hast yee may, for yee shall see the most worshipfullest knight in the world hard bestead. Hee is the noble king Arthur himselfe.' 'God defend,' said sir Tristram, 'that ever hee should be in such distresse.' Then they rode together a great pace till they came to a turret or castle, and underneath that castle they saw a knight standing on his feete fighting with two knights, and so sir Tristram beheld them. And at the last the two knights smote downe the one knight, and the one of them unlaced his helme to have slaine him. And the lady Annowre gate king Arthurs sword in her hand to have stricken off his head. And therewithall came sir Tristram with his sword drawn in his hand, crying, 'Traïtesse, traïtesse, leave that.' And forthwithall sir Tristram smote one of the two knights through the body that hee fell downe dead to the earth. And then hee rushed to the other knight, and with the pomell of his sword hee smote him so hard that hee fell from his horse and brake his backe in sunder. And in the meane while the damosell of the lake cryed unto king Arthur, 'Let not that untrue lady escape.' So king Arthur overtooke her, and with the same sword hee smote off her head. And the damosell of the lake tooke up her head and hung it up by the haire on her saddle bow. And then sir Tristram horsed king Arthur, and rode his way forth with him; but hee charged the lady of the lake not to discover his name as at that time.

CHAP. LVII.—*How sir Tristram came to La beale Isoud, and how sir Kay Hedijs began to love La beale Isoud, and of the letter that sir Tristram found.*

AND then, at a day set, sir Tristram and sir Lamoracke met at the well, and then they tooke sir Kay Hedijs at the fosters house, and so they sailed into Cornewaile altogether; and by the assent and information of dame Bragwaine, when they were landed they rode unto sir Dinas the seneshall, a

good and a trusty friend of sir Tristrams. And so dame Bragwaine and sir Dinas told the queene La beale Isoud that sir Tristram was nigh her in that country. Then for very pure joy La beale Isoud swounded, and when she might speake, she said, 'Gentle knight seneshall, helpe that I may speake with him, or else my heart will brast.' Then sir Dinas and dame Bragwaine brought sir Tristram and sir Kay Hedijs prively unto the court to a chamber where as La beale Isoud had assigned them. And at the first time that ever sir Kay Hedijs saw La beale Isoud, hee was so enamoured upon her, that he might never withdraw the very pure love; and privily he wrote unto her letters and ballads of the most goodliest that were in use in those dayes. And when La beale Isoud understood his letters, shee had great pittie of his complaint, and unadvisedly shee wrote another letter to comfort him withall. So on a day king Marke played at the chesse under a chamber window, and at that time sir Tristram and sir Kay Hedijs were within the chamber over king Marke, and as it mishappened sir Tristram found that letter that sir Kay Hedijs sent unto La beale Isoud; also hee found the letter that shee wrought to sir Kay Hedijs. And at that time La beale Isoud was in the same chamber. Then sir Tristram came to La beale Isoud, and said, 'Madame, here is a letter that was sent unto you, and here is the letter that ye sent unto him that sent you that letter. Alas! madame, now yee are a traitresse to me which doth me great paine.' And therewith sir Tristram drew out his sword, and said, 'Sir Kay Hedijs, keepe thee.' And then La beale Isoud swounded unto the earth. And when sir Kay Hedijs saw sir Tristram came upon him, he saw none other remedy but leapt out at a bay window, even over the head where king Marke sate playing at the chesse. And when the king saw one come hurling over his head, he said 'Fellow, what art thou, and what is the cause that thou leapest out of that window?' 'My lord the king,' said sir Kay Hedijs, 'it fortuneth mee that I was a sleepe in the window above your head, and as I slept I fell downe.' And so sir Kay Hedijs excused him.

CHAP. LVIII.—*How sir Tristram departed from Tintagill, and how he sorrowed, and was so long in a forrest till he was out of his mind.*

THEN sir Tristram dreaded sore lest he were discovered unto the king that he was there. And so when sir Tristram saw there was no resistance against him, hee sent Governale for his horse and for his speare, and knightly he rode forth openly out of the castle which was called the castle of Tintagill, and at the gate he met with sir Gingalin, sir Gawaines sonne. And anon sir Gingalin put his speare in the rest, and ranne against sir Tristram, and brake his speare. And sir Tristram at that time had but a sword, and gave him such a buffet upon

the helme, that he fell downe from the sadell to the earth. And then sir Tristram rode forth his way into the forrest. And all this doing saw king Marke; and then anon he sent a squire unto the hurt knight, and commanded him to come unto him, and so he did. And when king Marke wist that it was sir Gingalin, hee welcomed him, and gave him a horse, and asked him what knight it was that had encountred with him. 'Sir,' said sir Gingalin, 'I wote not what knight he was, but well I wote that hee sighed sore and made sorrowfull dole.' And then sir Tristram within a while met with a knight of his owne that hight sir Fergus. And then at the last sir Tristram sent unto the court by sir Fergus for to wit what tidings there was. And so, as hee rode by the way, he met with a damosell that came from sir Palomides to know how sir Tristram did. And then sir Fergus told her how hee was almost out of his minde. And then sir Fergus found queene Isoud sicke in her bed, making the greatest dole that any woman might make. And when the damosell found sir Tristram, shee made great dole because she might not amend him, for the more she made of him the more was his paine. And at the last sir Tristram tooke his horse and rode his way from her, and then was it three dayes and three nights or that she could find him againe, and then she brought him meate and drinke, but he would none take. And then another time sir Tristram escaped away from the damosel, and it happined him to ride by the same castle where sir Palomides and sir Tristram did battaile when La beale Isoud departed them, and there by fortune the damosell met with sir Tristram againe, making the greatest dole that ever any creature made, and shee went to the lady of the castle, and told her of the misadventure of sir Tristram. So this lady and the damosell brought him meate and drinke, but he eate but little thereof. So upon a night he put his horse from him, and then hee unlaced his armour, and went into the wilderness, and brake downe trees and boughes, and otherwhile, when hee found a harp that the lady sent him, then would he harp and play thereupon and weepe together. And sometime, when sir Tristram was in the wood that the lady wist not where hee was, then would she set her downe and play upon the harp. And so would sir Tristram come unto that harp, and sometime he would harpe himselfe. Thus he endured there a quarter of a yeare. And at the last he ran his way, and shee wist not where he was become. And then hee fell into the fellowship of heardmen and shepherds, and daily they would give him of their meate and drinke. And when he did any shrewd deede, they would beat him with rods, and so they clipped him with sheares, and made him like a foole¹.

¹ *Like a foole*.—The cutting of the hair close was a particular characteristic of the court fool in former times.

CHAP. LIX.—*How sir Tristram sowed sir Dagonet in a well, and how sir Palomides sent a damosell to seeke sir Tristram, and how sir Palomides met with king Marke.*

AND upon a day sir Dagonet, king Arthurs foole, came into Cornewaile with two squiers with him, and as they rode through that forrest they came by a faire well, where sir Tristram was wont to bee, and the weather was hot, and they alighted downe to drinke of that well. And in the meane while their horses brake loose.

Right so sir Tristram came to them, and first he sowed sir Dagonet in that well, and after his squiers, and thereat laughed the shepherds; and forthwith he ran after their horses, and so brought them againe one by one; and right so as wet as they were he made them to leape up and ride on their way. The meane while the damosell that sir Palomides sent to seeke sir Tristram went unto sir Palomides, and told him all the mischief that sir Tristram endured. 'Alas!' said sir Palomides, 'it is great pittie that ever so noble a knight should bee mischeved for the love of a lady; but neverthesse I will go and seeke him, and comfort him if I may.' Then, a little before that time, La beale Isoude had commanded sir Kay Hedijs out of the countrey of Cornewaile. So sir Kay Hedijs departed with a dolorous heart; and by adventure hee met with sir Palomides, and they enfellowshipped together, and either complayned unto other of their hot love that they loved La beale Isoud. 'Now let us,' said sir Palomides, 'seeke sir Tristram, that loveth her as well as we, and let us prove if we may recover him.' So they rode into that forest, and three daies and three nights they would never take their lodging, but ever sought sir Tristram.

And upon a time by adventure they met with king Marke, that was ridden all alone from his men. When they saw him, sir Palomides knew him, but sir Kay Hedijs knew him not. 'Ah! false king,' said sir Palomides, 'it is great pittie that thou hast thy life, for thou hast destroyed that most noble knight sir Tristram de Lyones, and therefore defend thee.' 'Nay,' said king Marke, 'I will not have to doe with you, for cause have yee none to me; for all the misease that sir Tristram hath was for a letter that he found, for as to mee I did to him no displeasure.' So when king Marke had thus excused himselfe, they were good friends, and king Marke would have had them unto Tintagel. But sir Palomides would not, but turned to the realme of Logris, and sir Kay Hedijs said that he would goe into Britain.

Now turne wee unto sir Dagonet againe, that when hee and his squiers were on horsebacke, he deemed that the shepherds had sent that foole to array them so because they

laughed at him, and so they rode unto the keepers of beasts and all to-beate them. Sir Tristram saw them beaten that were wont to give him meate and drinke; then hee ranne thither, and gat sir Dagonet by the head, and gave him such a fall that hee bruised him sore, so that he lay still. Then sir Dagonet rode to king Marke and told him how he had sped in that forrest; 'and therefore,' said sir Dagonet, 'beware yee, king Marke, that yee come not about that well in the forrest, for there is a foole, and that foole and I foole met together, and he had almost slaine me.'

CHAP. LX.—*How it was noysed that sir Tristram was dead, and how La beale Isoude would have slaine her selfe.*

THEN sir Andret, which was cosin unto sir Tristram, made a lady to say and to noyse it how that shee was with sir Tristram or that he dyed. And this tale shee brought unto king Markes court, that shee buried him by a well, and that or he dyed he besought king Marke for to make his cosin sir Andret king of the countrey of Lyones, of the which sir Tristram was lord of. But when the queene La beale Isoude heard of these tidings, shee made such sorrow that shee was full nigh out of her minde, and so upon a day shee thought to sley her selfe. And so upon a day La beale Isoude gat a sword prively, and bare it into her garden, and there shee pight the sword through a plumme tree up to the hilts, so that it stucked fast that it stood brest high; and as she would have runne upon the sword for to have slaine her selfe. Then, as shee kneeled downe before the sword, came king Marke and tooke her in his armes, and then hee tooke up the sword, and bare her away with him into a strong towre, and there he made her to be kept, and watched her surely. And after that shee lay long sicke, nigh at the point of death. And there was a gyant in that countrey that hight Tauleas, and for fear of sir Tristram more then seaven yere hee durst not much goe out at large, but for the most part he kept him in a sure castle of his owne. And so this sir Tauleas heard tell that sir Tristram was dead by the noyse of the court of king Marke, and then sir Tauleas went daily at large. And so it happined upon a day he came to the heardmen wandering and lingering¹, and there hee set him downe to rest among them. The meane while there came a knight of Cornewaile that led a lady with him, and his name was sir Dinaunt. And when the giant saw him, he went from the heardmen and hid him under a tree. And so the knight came to the well, and there hee alighted to rest him. And as soone as he was from his horse, the gyant sir Tauleas came betweene the knight and his horse, and leapt upon him. Then

¹ *Langering*.—Loitering; sauntering about.

the heardmen said unto sir Tristram, 'Helpe yonder knight.' Then sir Tristram was ware of the sword of the knight where it lay, and thither he ran and tooke up the sword, and smote off sir Tauleas head, and so went his way to the heardmen againe.

CHAP. LXI.—*How king Marke found sir Tristram, and made him to be borne home to Tintagill, and how he was there knowne by a brachet.*

THEN the knight tooke up the gyants head, and bare it with him unto king Marke, and told him what adventure betide him in the forrest. 'Where had ye this adventure?' said king Marke. 'Forsooth,' said sir Dinaunt, 'at the faire fountaine in your forrest, where many adventurous knights mete, and there is the mad man.' 'Well,' said king Marke, 'I will see that mad man.' And on the morrow king Marke went unto the forrest. And when the king came to the well, he found a man there lying and a sword by him. And then the king commanded his knights to take that man with fairnesse, 'and bring him to my castle.' So they did softly and faire, and cast mantels upon sir Tristram, and so led him unto Tintagill, and there they bathed him and washed him, and gave him good hot brothes, till they had brought him well to remembrance. But all this while there was no creature that knew sir Tristram, nor wist not from whence he came. So it hapined upon a day that the queene La beale Isoud heard of such a man, and how the king had brought him home to the court. And then a squire told the queene that hee was in the garden taking his rest. So when the queene looked upon sir Tristram, she was not remembred of him, but ever she said to dame Bragwaine, 'Mee seemeth I should have seene him before this time in many places.' But as soone as sir Tristram saw her, hee knew her well enough, and then he turned away his visage and wept. And La beale Isoud had alwayes a little brachet¹ with her, that sir Tristram had given her the first time that ever shee came into Cornewaile; and anon as this little brachet felt a savour of sir Tristram, shee lept upon him and licked his learis² and his eares, and then shee whined and quested³, and shee smelled at his feete and at his hands, and on all the parts of his body that she might come to. 'Ah, my lady,' said dame Bragwaine unto La beale Isoud, 'alas, alas!' said she, 'I well see it is mine owne lord sir Tristram.' And thereupon La beale Isoud fell downe in a sowne, and so lay a great while; and when shee might speake, shee said: 'My lord sir Tristram, blessed be God ye have your life, and now I am sure ye shall be discovered by this little brachet, for she will never leave

¹ *Brachet*.—A kind of small scenting hound.

² *Learis*.—His cheeks.

³ *Quested*.—Gave tongue, like a hound.

you ; and also I am sure that as soone as my lord king Marke shall know you hee will destroy you. For Gods sake, mine owne lord, then draw you unto the court of king Arthure, for there are yee beloved. And ever, and at all times earely and late I will bee at your commaund, to live as poore a life as ever did queene or lady.' 'Oh, madame,' said sir Tristram, 'goe from mee, for much anger and danger have I escaped for your love.'

CHAP. LXII.—*How king Marke, by the advise of his counsell, banished sir Tristram out of the countrey of Cornewaile for the terme of ten yeare.*

THEN La beale Isoud departed, but the brachet would not from him. And therewith came king Marke, and the brachet sate upon him, and bayed at them all. And therewith sir Andret spake and said : 'Sir, this is sir Tristram, I see by the brachet.' And so, by the advise of them all, sir Tristram was banished out of the countrey of Cornewaile for ten yeare. And in the meane while there came a knight of king Arthurs, his name was sir Dinadan, and his comming was to seeke after sir Tristram. Then they shewed him where he was, armed at all points, going unto the ship. And then he prayed sir Tristram to give him leave to goe in his fellowship. And so they tooke their horses and rode to their ships together. And when sir Tristram was in the ship, he said thus : 'Greete well king Marke and all mine enemies, and tell them I will come againe when I may. And well I am rewarded for the fighting with sir Marhaus, and delivering all the country from servage ; and for the fetching of La beale Isoud out of Ireland : and for what danger I had to bring queene Isoud from the castle : and for the fight I fought with sir Bleoberis for sir Segwarides wife : and for my fight with sir Blamor for king Anguish, father unto La beale Isoude : and for my fight with sir Lamorake at king Marke's request : and for my fight with the king of North-galis, and with the king with the hundred knights ; and both these kings would have put his land in servage ; and by me were they put to a rebuke ; and for the slaying of Tauleas, the mighty gyant ; and many moe deeds have I done for king Marke ; and now have I my guardon. And tell the king Marke that many noble knights of the round table have spared the barons of this countrey for my sake. Also I am not wel rewarded when I fought with the good knight sir Palomides, and rescued queene Isoud from him. And at that time king Marke said before all his barons I should have beene better rewarded.' And therewith he tooke the sea.

CHAP. LXIII.—*How the damosell sought helpe for to help sir Launcelot against thirtie knights, and how sir Tristram fought with them.*

AND at the next¹ lodging² fast by the sea, there encountred with sir Tristram and with sir Dinadan sir Ector de Maris and sir Bors de Ganis. And there sir Ector encountred with sir Dinadan, and smote him and his horse downe all on an heape to the ground. And then sir Tristram would have justed with sir Bors de Ganis, and sir Bors said hee would not with his good wil just with no Cornish knights, for they are not called men of worship. And all this was done upon a bridge. And with this came sir Bleoberis and sir Driaunt; and sir Bleoberis proffered to just with sir Tristram, and there sir Tristram smote downe sir Bleoberis. Then said sir Bors de Ganis, 'I wist never no Cornish knight of so great valour as that knight which beareth the trappours embroydred with crownes.' And then sir Tristram and sir Dinadan departed from them, and rode into a forrest, and there met them a damosell that came for the love of sir Launcelot to seeke after some noble knights of king Arthurs court for to rescue sir Launcelot. And so there was ordained for sir Launcelot by the treason of queene Morgan le Fay to have slaine sir Lancelot, and for that cause shee ordained thirtie knights for to lye in a waite for sir Launcelot, and this damosell knew of this treason. And so this damosell met with sir Bors, sir Bleoberis, sir Ector, and sir Driaunt, and there shee told them of the treason of queene Morgan le Fay. And then they all promised her that they would bee nigh where sir Launcelot should meete with the thirtie knights. So the damosell departed, and by adventure shee met with sir Tristram and with sir Dinadan, and there the damosell told them all the treason that was ordained for sir Lancelot. 'Faire damosell,' said sir Tristram, 'bring me to that place where they shall meete with sir Launcelot.' Then said sir Dinadan, 'What will ye doe? it is not for us to fight with thirtie knights.' 'Nay,' said sir Tristram, 'I promise thee, sir Dinadan, but if thou wilt abide with me here I shall slay thee, for I desire no more of thee but to answer one knight, and if thy heart will not serve thee, stand by and looke upon mee and them.' So then anon these thirtie knights came fast by these foure knights, and they were ware of them, and either saw other. And the foure knights let them passe to this entent, that they would see and behold what they would doe with sir Launcelot. And so the thirtie knights past on their way, and came by sir Tristram and sir Dinadan. And then sir Tristram cryed on high, and said: 'Loe, heere is a knight against you for the love of sir Launcelot!' And there he slew two with one speare, and ten with his sword. And

¹ *Next.*—Nearest.

² *Lodging.*—Landing, Caxton.

then came in sir Dinadan, and he did passing well. And so of the thirtie knights there went but ten away, and they fled. And this battaile saw sir Bors de Ganis, and his three fellowes. And then they saw well it was the same knight that had justed with them at the bridge. Then they tooke their horses, and rode to sir Tristram, and praised him and thanked him of his good deeds.

CHAP. LXIV.—*How sir Tristram and sir Dinadan came to a lodging where they must just with two knights.*

THEN sir Tristram and sir Dinadan rode forth their way till they came to the shepheards and heardmen, and there they asked them if they knew any lodging or harbour there about. 'Forsooth, faire lords,' said the heardmen, 'nigh hereby is a good lodging in a castle, but such a custome there is, that there shall no knight be lodged, but if he first just with two knights; and if he be but one knight, he must just with two; and when ye bee within, soone shall yee bee matched.' And to make short tale, sir Tristram and sir Dinadan smote both knights down, and so they entred into the castle, and had good cheere as well as they could thinke or devise. And when they were unarmed and had thought to have taken their rest, there came in at the gate sir Palomides and sir Gaheris, requiring to have the custome of the castle. 'What is this?' said sir Dinadan; 'I would have my rest.' 'That may not be,' said sir Tristram; 'now must we needs defend the custome of the castle, in so much as we have the better of the lord of this castle, and therefore,' said sir Tristram, 'needs must ye make you ready.' 'In the devils name,' said sir Dinadan, 'came I into your company.' And so therewith they made them ready. And sir Gaheris encountred with sir Tristram, and there sir Gaheris had a fall. And sir Palomides encountred with sir Dinadan, and sir Palomides gave sir Dinadan a fall. And then must they fight on foote; and that would not sir Dinadan, for hee was sore bruised and hurt of that fall that sir Palomides had given him. 'Then,' said sir Tristram, 'I will fight with them both.' 'Nay,' said sir Palomides, 'it is too much shame for us two knights to fight with one.' And then he bad sir Gaheris to stand aside with that knight that had no lust to fight. And then they rode together and fought a great while, and at the last by one assent sir Gaheris and sir Dinadan went betweene them and departed them in sunder. And then, by the assent of sir Tristram, they would have lodged together. But sir Dinadan would not lodge in that castle, and then he cursed the time that ever he came in their fellowship; and so he and sir Tristram rode thence two miles to a priory, and there they were well at ease. And that same night sir

Bors, and sir Bleoberis, and sir Ector, and sir Driaunt abode still in the same place there as sir Tristram fought with the thirtie knights, and there they met with sir Launcelot, and had made promise to lodge with sir Colgrevice the same night.

CHAP. LXV.—*How sir Tristram justed with sir Kay and sir Sagramore le Desirous, and how sir Gawaine turned sir Tristram from Morgan le Fay.*

SO there was a knight in that priorie that hight sir Pellinore, and hee desired to know the name of sir Tristram, but in no wise he could not. And then sir Tristram departed, and left sir Dinadan in the priorie, for hee was so weary and so bruised that hee might not ride. And then this knight, sir Pellinore, said to sir Dinadan, 'Sithen that yee will not tell mee that knights name, then will I ride after him and make him to tell mee his name, or he shall die therefore.' So that knight sir Pellinore rode after sir Tristram and required him to just with him. Then sir Tristram smote him downe, and wounded him through the shoulder, and so past on his way. And on the next day following sir Tristram met with pursevants, and they told him that there was made a great cry of a turnament betweene king Carados of Scotland and the king of Northgalis, and either should just against other at the castle of Maidens¹. And so by adventure they met with sir Kay the seneshall and sir Sagramore le Desirous, and sir Kay required sir Tristram to just. And sir Tristram smote downe sir Kay, and rode on his way. Then sir Sagramore le Desirous rode fast after sir Tristram, and perswaded him to just with him. And then sir Tristram cast downe sir Sagramore from his horse, and rode his way.

And this same day hee met with a damosell that told him that hee should winne great worship of a knight adventurous which did much harme in all the country. So sir Tristram rode with that damosell a sixe mile, and then met with him sir Gawaine, and therewithall sir Gawaine knew the damosell that shee was a damosell of queene Morgan le Fay, so sir Gawaine understood that shee led that knight to some mischief. So then sir Gawaine drew out his sword, and said, 'Damosell, but if thou tell mee for what cause thou ledest this knight with thee, thou shalt die for it anon. I know all your ladies treason and yours.' 'Mercy, sir Gawaine,' said the damosell, 'if yee will save my life, I shall tell you all as it is. My lady, queene Morgan le Fay, hath ordained thirty ladies to espie after sir

¹ *Castle of Maidens*.—The castle of Edinburgh is generally understood by the castle of Maidens (in Latin, *castrum puellarum*), from an erroneous notion of the meaning of the other name.

Launcelot or sir Tristram, that they should turne them with their wiles to Morgan le Fays castle, saying that they should doe deeds of worship; and if any of those knights came there, there be thirty knights lying watching in a court¹ for to waite upon sir Launcelot or upon sir Tristram.'

CHAP. LXVI.—*How sir Tristram and sir Gawaine rode to have fought against the thirtie knights, but they durst not come out.*

'SIR,' said sir Gawaine, 'will yee stand with mee, and wee will see the malice of these thirty knights?' 'Sir,' said sir Tristram, 'goe yee to them and it please you, and yee shall see I will not faile you, and God speed us so that wee may winne worship.' So then sir Gawaine and sir Tristram rode toward the castle where Morgan le Fay was; and when they came before the castle, sir Gawaine spake on high and said, 'Queene Morgan le Fay, send out your knights which yee have laid in a watch for sir Launcelot or for sir Tristram.' Then the queene spake and all the thirtie knights at once, and said, 'Sir Gawaine, we know thee passing well; but thou speakest upon the pride of that good knight that is there with thee: and it is more for his sake then for thine that wee come not out of this castle; for that knight which beareth the armes of Cornewaile wee know him well and what he is.' And then sir Gawaine and sir Tristram departed, and rode on their way together, and there by adventure they met with sir Kay and sir Sagramore le Desirous, and then they were passing glad of sir Gawaine and hee of them, but they wist not what he was with the shield of Cornewaile but by deeming. And thus they rode together a day or two. And then they were ware of sir Breuse saunce Pitie chasing a lady for to have slaine her. 'Hold you all still,' said sir Gawain, 'and shew none of you forth, and yee shall see me reward yonder false knight, for if he espie you he is so well horsed that he will escape away.' And then sir Gawaine rode betweene Breuse saunce Pitie and the lady, and said, 'False knight, leave her, and have to doe with me.' And so there sir Breuse overthrew sir Gawaine, and then he rode over him and overthwart him twentie times, to have destroyed him. And when sir Tristram saw him doe so vilaynous a deede, he hurled out against him. And when sir Bruse saw him with his shield of Cornewaile, he knew well that it was sir Tristram, and then he fled, and sir Tristram followed after him. And so, when he had long chased him, he saw a faire well, and thither he rode for to rest him, and tied his horse unto a tree.

¹ *A court.—In a tower, Caxton.*

CHAP. LXVII.—*How the damosell Bragwaine found sir Tristram sleeping by a well, and how she delivered letters to him from La beale Isoude.*

AND then hee pulled off his helme, and washed his visage and his hands, and so he fell on sleepe. In the meane while came a damosell that had sought sir Tristram many wayes and daies within this land, and, when she came unto the wel, shee looked upon him, and had forgotten the remembrance of sir Tristram, but by his horse shee knew him, that hight Passe-Brewell, that had beene sir Tristrams horse many yeares. For when he was mad in the forrest, sir Fergus kept him. So then the damosell Bragwaine abode still till he was wakned. And then shee told him how shee had sought him long and farre¹, how she had letters from La beale Isoude. And then anon sir Tristram read them, and wit ye wel he was glad and merry, for therin was many a piteous complaint. Then said sir Tristram, 'Lady Bragwayne, yee shall ride with me till the turnement be done at the castle of Maidens, and then shall yee beare letters and tidings with you.' And then sir Tristram tooke his horse, and sought lodging, and there he met with a good ancient knight that prayed him to lodge with him. So this olde knights name was sir Pellounes, and he told of the great turneyment that should be at the castle of Maidens. And there sir Launcelot and thirtie knights of his blood had ordayned shields of Cornewaile. And right so there came one unto sir Pellounes, and told him that his son, sir Persides de Bloise, was come home, and then that knight held up his hand and thanked God of his comming home. So on a time sir Tristram and sir Persides came to their lodging both at once, and so they unarmed them, and put upon them their clothing, and then these two knights each one welcomed other. And when sir Persides understood and knew that sir Tristram was a knight of Cornewaile, he said, 'I was once in Cornewaile, and there I justed afore king Marke; and so by fortune it happined me at that time to overthrow ten knights, and then came to me sir Tristram de Lyones and overthrew mee, and tooke my lady from me, and that shall I never forget; but I shall remember me and ever I may see my time.' Right as they stode thus talking at a bay window of that castle, they saw many knights riding to and fro towards the turneyment. And then was sir Tristram ware of a likely knight riding upon a mighty blacke horse, and a blacke covered shield. 'What knight is that,' said sir Tristram, 'with the blacke horse and the blacke shield? he seemeth to be a good knight.' 'I know him wel,' said sir Persides, 'it is sir Palomides, that is yet unchristned.'

¹ Long and farre.—Longe and brode, Caxton.

CHAP. LXVIII.—*How sir Tristram had a fall of sir Palomides, and how sir Launcelot overthrew two knights.*

THEN they saw much people of the countrey follow sir Palomides. And within a while after there came a squire of the castle that told sir Pelounes, that was lord of the castle, that a knight with a blacke shield had smitten downe thirteen knights. 'Faire brother,' said sir Tristram to sir Persides, 'let us goe and see the play.' So they armed them and thither they went; whereas many knights assaied themselves before the turneyment. And anon sir Palomides saw sir Persides, and then he sent a squire unto him, and said, 'Goe thou unto yonder knight with the greene shield and therin a lyon of gold, and say yee unto him that I require him to just with me; and tell him that my name is sir Palomides.' And so there anon they met together, but sir Persides had a fall. And then sir Tristram dressed him for to be revenged upon sir Palomides. And that anon saw sir Palomides, which was ready, and so was not sir Tristram, and tooke him at advantage, and smote him over his horse taile when hee had no speare in his rest. And then sir Tristram sent unto sir Palomides by Governale his squire, and prayed him to just with him once againe at his request. 'Nay,' said sir Palomides, 'as at this time I will not just with that knight; and if hee be wroth, hee may revenge him to morrow at the castle of Maidens, where he shall see me and many other knights.' Right so as they stood talking, there came by sir Tristram a likely knight, riding passing soberly and heavily with a blacke shield. 'What knight is that?' said sir Tristram to sir Persides. 'I know him well,' said sir Persides, 'for his name is sir Briaunt of Northwales.' And there came sir Launcelot du Lake with a shield of the armes of Cornewaile, and he sent a squire to sir Briaunt, and required to just. 'I will doe that I may,' said sir Briaunt. And there sir Launcelot smote downe sir Briaunt from his horse, and he had a great fall. And then there came two knights of Northwales, the one hight sir Hewe de la Mountaine, the other hight sir Mardoche de la Mountaine, and they challenged sir Launcelot foote hot¹. Then sir Launcelot with one speare smote them downe both over their horse croupe. And so sir Launcelot rode forth on his way. 'By my faith,' said sir Tristram, 'he is a good knight that beareth the shield of Cornewaile; and mee seemeth he rideth in the best manner that ever I saw knight ride.' So then the king of Northgalis rode hastily unto sir Palomides, and prayed him heartily for his love to just with that knight that had done us of Northgalis despite. 'Sir,' said sir Palomides, 'I will just at your request, and require that knight to just with me; and often I have scene a man have a fall at his owne request.'

¹ *Foote hot.*—Without resting.

CHAP. LXIX.—*How sir Launcelot justed with sir Palomides and overthrew him, and how hee was afterward assailed with twelve knights.*

THEN sir Palomides sent unto sir Launcelot a squire, and required him to just. And then either of the knights made them ready with two great and huge speares. Right so they spurred their horses and feutred their speares, and either hit other; and there sir Palomides brake a speare upon sir Lancelot, and he sat still and moved not, but sir Launcelot smote him so mightily, that he made him to avoid his sadle, and the stroke brake his shield and hawberke, and he had not fallen he had beene slaine. Right so sir Launcelot rode his way, and rode to a well to drinke and to rest him. And they of Northgalis espied him where he rode, and then there followed him twelve knights who came suddenly upon sir Launcelot, and uneth he might put upon him his helme and take his horse, but they were in hand with him. And then sir Launcelot gat his speare and rode through them, and there he slew a knight and brake his speare in his body. Then he drew his sword, and within few strookes hee had slaine other three knights, and the remnant that abode hee wounded them full sore. Thus sir Launcelot escaped from his enemies of Northgalis; and then he rode forth on his way unto a friend, and there he lodged him till on the morrow. So sir Launcelot was with king Arthur, and justed not the first day.

CHAP. LXX.—*How sir Tristram behaved him the first day of the turnament, and there he had the prise.*

NOW turne we to sir Tristram de Lyones, that commanded Governale his servant for to ordaine him a black shield, with none other remembrance therein. And so sir Persides and sir Tristram departed from their hoast sir Pellounes, and then they drew them unto king Carados side of Scotland. And anon knights began the field; and sir Persides and sir Tristram, so fared that they put aback the king of Northgalis. And then there came in sir Bleoberis de Ganis and sir Gaheris with them of Northgalis; and then was sir Persides smitten downe and almost slaine, for more then fortie horsemen went over him. For sir Bleoberis did great deeds of armes, and sir Gaheris failed him not. Then sir Tristram thought it a shame that sir Persides was so done to, and he rode unto sir Gaheris and smote him downe from his horse. And then sir Bleoberis rode against sir Tristram in great ire, and sir Tristram there met with him and smote sir Bleoberis from his horse. So then the king with the hundred knights horsed sir Bleoberis and Gaheris againe; and there began a great meddle, and ever sir Tristram held them passing short, and ever sir Bleoberis was passing

busie upon sir Tristram. And there came sir Dinadan against sir Tristram, and there hee gave sir Dinadan such a buffet that he sowned¹ in his saddle. With that came sir Bleoberis, and sir Tristram gave him such a buffet that downe he laid his head, and then he caught him by his helme and pulled him under his feete. And then king Arthur blew to lodging. And sir Tristram departed to his pavilion, and sir Dinadan rode with him then.

So the first day king Arthur and all the kings and lords that were judges gave sir Tristram the prise, how bee it they knew him not, but named him the knight with the blacke shield.

CHAP. LXXI.—*How sir Tristram returned against king Arthurs part, because he saw sir Palomides on that part.*

SIR Palomides on the next morrow returned from the partie of king Northgalis and rode to king Arthurs side, where was king Carados, and the king of Ireland, and sir Lancelots kinne and sir Gawains kinne. So sir Palomides sent a damosell unto sir Tristram, that asked him what was his right name. 'As for that,' said sir Tristram, 'tell sir Palomides that I am the same knight that he smote down in the evening before the turnament; and tell him plainly, on what part that sir Palomides be, I will be on the contrary part.' 'Sir,' said the damosell, 'yee shall understand that sir Palomides will be on king Arthurs side, where the most noble knights of the world bee.' 'In the name of God,' said sir Tristram, 'then will I be with the king of Northgalis, because that sir Palomides will be on king Arthurs side, and else would I be on my lord king Arthurs side but for his sake.' So then when king Arthur was come, they let blow unto the field. And so king Carados justed against the king with the hundred knights, and there king Carados had a fall; and right so came in king Arthurs knights, and they bare backe the king of Northgalis knights. And then came in sir Tristram, and hee began so roughly and so bigly that there was not one that might withstand him: and at the last sir Tristram haunted among the fellowship of king Ban, and there fell upon him sir Bors de Ganis, and sir Ector de Maris, and sir Blamor de Ganis, with a great many of other knights. And then sir Tristram smote downe on the right hand and on the left hand, that all the lords and ladies spake of his noble deeds. And then sir Tristram saw another fellowship by themselves, and there were as good as forty knights together, and sir Kay the seneshall was their governour. And then sir Tristram rode in among them all, and there he smote downe sir Kay from his horse, and fared among those knights like a greyhound among conies. So sir Launcelot rode with his

¹ *Sowned*.—Swooned.

sword drawn in his hand to seeke sir Tristram; and then hee espied him how he hurled here and there, and at every strooke sir Tristram well nigh smote down a knight. 'O mercy, Jesu!' said king Arthur, 'sith the time I bare armes saw I never no knight doe so mervailous deeds of armes.' 'If I should set upon this knight,' said sir Launcelot to himselfe, 'I should shame myselfe.' And therewith sir Launcelot put up his sword. And then the king with the hundred knights and an hundred moe of Northgalis set upon twentie knights of sir Launcelots kinne, and those twentie knights held them alway together as wild swine, and none would faile other. And when sir Tristram beheld the noblesse of those twentie knights, hee mervailed of their noble deeds; for he saw well by their fare, and by their rule, that they had leaver to die then to avoide the field. And then sir Tristram rode to the king with the hundred knights, and said to him, 'Sir, I pray you, leave your fighting with those twentie knights, for yee shall winne no worship of them, for yee be too many and they too few; therefore leave your fighting with them, for to encrease my worship I will ride to the twentie knights to helpe them with all my might and power.' 'Nay,' said the king with the hundred knights, 'ye shall not doe so. I will withdraw my knights for your pleasure, for evermore a good knight will favour another, and like will draw to like and semblable.'

CHAP. LXXII.—*How sir Tristram found sir Palomides by a well, and brought him with him to his lodging.*

THEN the king with the hundred knights withdrew his knights. And all this while sir Launcelot had watched upon sir Tristram with a very purpose to have fellowship with him. And so then suddainely sir Tristram, sir Dinadan, and Governale his man, rode on their way into the forrest, that no man perceived where they went. So then king Arthur blew unto lodging, and gave the king of Northgales the prise, because that sir Tristram was on his side. And then in all the field was such a noise, that the wind thereof might be heard two mile thence, how the lords and ladyes cried, 'The knight with the blacke shield hath wonne the field.' 'Alas!' said king Arthur, 'where is that knight become? it is shame to all those in the field so to let him scape away from you; but with gentlesse and curtesie yee might have brought him unto me to the castle of Maidens.' Then the noble king Arthur went unto his knights and comforted them in the best manner that he could. 'My fellows,' said king Arthur, 'looke that yee bee of good cheere, for to morrow will I bee in the field with you and revenge you of your enemies.' Then dame Bragwaine tooke her leave of queene Guenever; and so she rode after sir Tristram, and as

she rode through the forrest, she heard a great crie of a man, and then she commanded her squire to goe into the forrest to wit what that noyse was. And so hee came to a well, and there found hee a knight bound unto a tree, crying as hee had beene out of his mind, and his horse and his harneyes standing by him. And when he espied the squire, therewith he abrayed¹, and brake himselfe loose, and tooke his sword in his hand, and ranne to have slaine that squire. And the squire tooke his horse and fled as fast as ever hee might unto dame Bragwaine againe, and tould her of his adventure. So shee rode unto sir Tristrams pavilion, and told sir Tristram what adventure she had found in the forrest. And then sir Tristram rode thither, and there he heard how the knight complained unto himselfe, and said, 'I wofull knight, sir Palomides, that am defouled with falshood and treason, through sir Bors and sir Ector?' So sir Tristram ranne upon sir Palomides, and held him fast in his armes. 'What art thou,' said sir Palomides, 'that so holdeth me?' 'I am,' said sir Tristram, 'a man of this forrest, that would thee no harme.' Sir Tristram said to sir Palomides such kind words that he went with him unto his lodging. And so they rode together till they came to sir Tristram's pavilion, and there sir Palomides had all the cheere that might be had al that night. But in no wise sir Palomides might not know what sir Tristram was. And sir Palomides might not sleepe for anguish; and in the dawning of the day hee tooke his horse privily, and rode his way to sir Gaheris and to sir Sagramore le Desirous, where as they were in their pavilions, for they three were fellows at the beginning of this turneyment. And then on the morrow the king blew unto turneyment upon the third day.

CHAP. LXXIII.—*How sir Tristram smote downe sir Palomides, and how he justed with king Arthur, and other feates.*

SO the king of Northgalis and the king with the hundred knights they two encountred with king Carados and with the king of Ireland, and there the king with the hundred knights smote downe king Carados, and the king of Northgalis smote downe the king of Ireland. With that came in sir Palomides, and when hee came he made great worke, for by his endented shield he was well knowne. So came in king Arthur, and did great deeds of armes together, and put the king of Northgalis and the king with the hundred knights to the worst. With that came in sir Tristram with his blacke shield, and anon he justed with sir Palomides, and there by fine force sir Tristram smote sir Palomides over his horse taile. Then king Arthur cryed,

¹ *Abrayed*.—Started, or made a sudden effort.

‘Knight with the blacke shield, make thee ready to mee.’ And in the same wise sir Tristram smote downe king Arthur. And then the king and sir Palomides were remounted. So king Arthur with a great eger heart gat a speare in his hand, and there upon the one side hee smote sir Tristram over his horse. And then full fast sir Palomides came upon sir Tristram as hee was on foote, to have over-ridden him. And sir Tristram was ware of him, and there he stepped aside, and pulled him downe from his horse. And then sir Palomides lightly arose, and at the last sir Tristram smote sir Palomides upon the helme three mighty strookes, and at every strooke that hee gave him he said: ‘Have this for sir Tristrams sake.’ With that sir Palomides fel to the earth groveling. And then came the king with the hundred knights, and brought sir Tristram a horse, and so was he horsed againe. By then was sir Palomides horsed, and with great ire hee justed at sir Tristram who avoided his speare, and gate him by the necke with both his hands, and pulled him cleane out of his saddle; and then, in the presence of them all, he let him fall at his adventure. So sir Tristram was ware of king Arthur with a naked sword in his hand, and with his speare sir Tristram ran on king Arthur, and king Arthur boldly abode him, and with his sword hee smote atwo his speare, and therewith sir Tristram was astonied, and so king Arthur gave him three or foure great strookes or hee might get out his sword. And at the last sir Tristram drew his sword, and assailed king Arthur passing hard. With that the great presse departed; then sir Tristram rode here and there and did great feats; and eleven of the good knights of the blood of king Ban that day sir Tristram smote downe, that all the estates mervailed of his great deedes, and all cryed upon the knight with the blacke shield.

CHAP. LXXIV.—*How sir Launcelot hurt sir Tristram, and how after, sir Tristram smote downe Palomides.*

THEN this cry was so great, that sir Lancelot heard it, and came towards the cry. And then sir Launcelot cryed on high, ‘Knight with the blacke shield, make thee ready for to just with me.’ Then they came together as thunder, and sir Tristrams speare brake in peeces, and sir Launcelot by malefortune¹ strook sir Tristram on the side a deep wound nigh to the death, but yet sir Tristram avoyded not his saddle, and so the speare brake. And therewithall sir Tristram, that was wounded, gat out his sword and rushed to sir Launcelot, and gave him three great strookes upon the helme that the fire sprang out, and sir Launcelot stooped low his head toward his

¹ *Malefortune*.—Misfortune; mishap.

saddle bow. And therewithall sir Tristram departed from the field, for he felt him so wounded that hee wend he should have died. And sir Dinadan espied him, and followed him into the forrest. So when sir Tristram was departed by the forrest side, he alighted and unlaced his harneis, and refreshed his wound. Then wend sir Dinadan that he should have died. 'Nay, nay,' said sir Tristram, 'sir Dinadan, never dread thee, for I am heart hole, and of this wound I shall soone be hole by the grace of God.' By then sir Dinadan was ware where sir Palomides came riding straight upon them. And then sir Tristram was ware that sir Palomides came for to have destroyed him. And so sir Dinadan gave him warning, and said: 'My lord sir Tristram, yee are so sore wounded that yee may not have to doe with him, therefore I will ride against him and doe what I may, and, if I am slaine, yee may pray for my soule, and in the meane while yee may withdraw you and goe into the castle, or into the forrest, that hee shall not meete with you.' Sir Tristram smiled, and said: 'I thanke you, sir Dinadan, of your good will, but hee shall wit that I am able to handle him.' And anon hastily he armed him, and rode toward sir Palomides a soft pace. And when sir Palomides saw that, he made a countenance to amend his horse, but he abode sir Gaheris that came after him, and when hee was come, hee rode toward sir Tristram. So they met together, and sir Tristram smote downe sir Palomides, and he had a grievous fall, so that he lay still as he had beene dead. And then sir Tristram ranne upon sir Gaheris, and smote him over his horse croupe, that he lay still as though he had beene dead. And then sir Tristram rode his way, and left sir Persides squire within the pavilions, and sir Tristram and sir Dinadan rode to an old knights place to lodge them. And the old knight had five sonnes at the tournament, for whom he prayed God heartily for their comming home. And they came home all five well beaten.

And when sir Tristram departed for to goe into the forrest, sir Launcelot held alway the stoure¹ like hard, as a man enraged that tooke no heede to himselfe, and wit yee well there was many a noble knight against him. And because sir Launcelot abode and was the last in the field, the prise was given him. But sir Launcelot would neither for king, queene, nor knight have the prise; but where the cry was cried through the field, 'Sir Launcelot, sir Launcelot hath wonne the field this day!' sir Launcelot lets make another cry contrary to that cry: 'Sir Tristram hath wonne the field, for he began first, and last he hath endured, and so hath he done the first day, the second, and the third day.

¹ *Stoure*.—The battle, or combat. The edit. of 1634 reads, erroneously, *lowre*.

CHAP. LXXV.—*How the prise of the third day was given to sir Launcelot, and sir Launcelot gave it to sir Tristram.*

THEN all the estates and degrees high and low said great worship of sir Launcelot, for the honour that hee did unto sir Tristram, and for that honour doing to sir Tristram hee was at that time more praised and renowned, than if hee had overthrown five hundred knights; and all the people cryed at once, 'Sir Launcelot hath wonne the field, whosoever say nay.' Then was sir Launcelot wroth and ashamed, and therewith hee rode unto king Arthur. 'Alas!' said the king, 'we are all dismaied that sir Tristram is thus departed from us.' And then king Arthur, sir Launcelot, and sir Dodinas le Savage tooke their horses to seeke sir Tristram, and by the meanes of sir Persides, who had told king Arthur where sir Tristram was in his pavilion; but when they came there, sir Tristram and sir Dinadan were gone. Then king Arthur and sir Launcelot were heavy, and returned againe to the castle of Maidens, making great mone for the hurt done to sir Tristram, and his suddaine departing. 'So God me helpe,' said king Arthur, 'I am more heavie that I can not meete with him, then for all the hurts that all my knights have had at the tournament.' Right so came sir Gaheris, and told to king Arthur how sir Tristram had smitten downe sir Palomides, and it was at sir Palomides owne request. 'Alas!' said king Arthur, 'that was great dishonour to sir Palomides, in as much as sir Tristram was sore wounded.' And then king Arthur made a great feast to all them that would come. Thus let we passe king Arthur, and a little we will turne unto sir Palomides, that, after he had a fall of sir Tristram hee followed him by adventure, and as hee came by a river hee would have made his horse to have lept over, and the horse failed footing and fell in the river; wherefore sir Palomides avoided his horse and swamme to the land.

CHAP. LXXVI.—*How sir Palomides came to the castle where sir Tristram was, and of the quest that sir Launcelot and ten knights made for sir Tristram.*

AND when hee came to the land, he put off his harneis, and sate roaring and crying as a man out of his minde. Right so there came a damosell that was sent from sir Gawaine and his brother unto sir Mordred, that lay sicke in the same place with the old knight where sir Tristram was. And so this damosell came by sir Palomides, and shee and hee had language together, the which pleased neither of them. And so the damosell rode her way till shee came to the old knights place, and there shee told that old knight how shee had met with the wooddest knight that ever she met withall. 'What thing bare hee in his shield?' said sir Tristram. 'It was

endented with white and blacke,' said the damosell. 'Ah!' said sir Tristram, 'that was the good knight sir Palomides; for well I know him,' said sir Tristram, 'for one of the best knights now living in this realme.' Then the old knight tooke a little hackney, and rode for sir Palomides, and brought him unto his manour. So leave wee them a little while in the castle with the old knight sir Darras.

Now shall wee speake of king Arthur, that said to sir Launcelot, 'Had not ye beene, we had not lost sir Tristram, and in an evill time, yee encountred with him.' 'My lord Arthur,' said sir Launcelot, 'ye put upon mee that I would bee causer of his departing; God knoweth it was against my will. And my lord, yee shall understand that sir Tristram is a man that I am loath to offend, for hee hath done for me more then ever I did for him, as yet.' Then sir Launcelot made to bring forth a booke; and then sir Launcelot said: 'Heere be tenne knights that will sweare upon a booke never to rest one night where wee rest another these twelve moneths till wee find sir Tristram. And as for mee, I promise you upon this booke, that if I may meete with him, either by fairenesse or foulnesse I shall bring him with me unto this court, or else I shall die therefore.' And the names of these ten knights that had undertaken this quest were these following: sir Launcelot, sir Ector de Maris, sir Bors de Ganis, sir Bleoberis, sir Blamor de Ganis, sir Lucas the butler, sir Ewaine, sir Galihad, sir Lyonell, and sir Galihodin. So these ten noble knights rode upon their quest all together untill they came to a crosse that stood betweene four high wayes, and there departed the fellowship in foure parts for to seeke sir Tristram. And as sir Launcelot rode by adventure he met with the damosell dame Bragwaine, the which was sent into that countrey for to seeke sir Tristram, and shee fled as fast as her palfray might runne. So sir Launcelot met with her, and asked her why she fled. 'Ah, faire knight,' said dame Bragwaine, 'I flee for dread of my life, for heere followeth me sir Breuse saunce Pity for to slay me.' 'Hold you nigh me,' said sir Lancelot. When sir Breuse saunce Pitty saw sir Launcelots shield, he fled, and hee was so well horsed that when him list to flee he still might well flee, and so abide when him list. And then sir Launcelot returned unto dame Bragwaine, and shee thanked him of his great labour.

CHAP. LXXVII.—*How sir Tristram, sir Palomides, and sir Dinadan were taken and put in prison.*

NOW will wee speake of sir Lucas¹ the butler, which by fortune came riding to the same place where sir Tristram was, and hee came for to aske harbour. So the porter asked

¹ *Sir Lucas.*—Caxton has here always *Lucan*.

what was his name. 'Tell your lord that my name is sir Lucas the butler, a knight of the round table.' So the porter went unto sir Darras, lord of the place, and told him who was there to aske harbour. 'Nay, nay,' said sir Daname (the which was nephew unto sir Darras), 'tell him that hee shall not lodge here, but let him wit that I sir Daname will meet with him anon, and bid him make him ready.' So sir Daname came forth on horsebacke, and there they met together with speares, and sir Lucas smote downe sir Daname over his horse croupe; and then he fled into the place, and sir Lucas rode after him and asked after him many times. Then sir Dinadan said to sir Tristram, 'It is shame to see the lords cosin of this place defouled.' 'Abide,' said sir Tristram, 'and I shall redresse it.' And in the meane while sir Dinadan was on horsebacke, and he justed with sir Lucas the butler, and there sir Lucas smote sir Dinadan through the thicke of the thigh, and so hee rode his way, and sir Tristram was wroth that sir Dinadan was hurt, and followed after and thought to avenge him. And within a while he overtooke sir Lucas, and bad him turne. And so they met together that sir Tristram hurt sir Lucas passing sore, and gave him a fall. With that came sir Ewaine, a gentle knight, and when he saw sir Lucas so hurt, he called sir Tristram to just with him. 'Faire knight,' said sir Tristram, 'tell me your name, I require you.' 'Sir knight, wit yee well my name is sir Ewaine le fise du roy Urein.' And when sir Tristram saw none other but he must just, he rode against him, and overthrew sir Ewaine, and hurt him in the side, and so he departed unto his lodging againe. Then sir Ewaine let ordeine an horse-litter, and brought sir Lucas unto the abbey of Ganis, and the castle thereby hight the castle of Gadis¹, of the which sir Bleoberis was lord. And at that castle sir Launcelot promised all his fellowes to meete in the quest of sir Tristram. So when sir Tristram was come to his lodging, there came a damosell and tolde unto sir Darras that three of his sonnes were slaine at the turneyment, and two greuously wounded that they were never like to helpe themselves, and all this was done by a noble knight that bare the blacke shield, and that was he that bare the prise. So sir Darras went unto the chamber of sir Tristram, and there he found his shield and shewed it to the damosell. 'Ah, sir,' said the damosell, 'that same is he that slew your three sonnes.' So without any tarrying sir Darras put sir Tristram, sir Palomides, and sir Dinadan within a strong prison; and there sir Tristram was like to have died of great sicknesse. And there came fortie knights to sir Darras that were of his kinne, and they would have slaine sir Tristram and his two fellowes, but sir Darras would not suffer it, and kept them in prison, and meate and drinke they had enough.

¹ *Castle of Gadis.—Ganys, Caxton.*

CHAP. LXXVIII.—*How king Marke was sory of the good renoune of sir Tristram, and how some of king Arthurs knights justed with knights of Cornewaile.*

NOW will we leave sir Tristram, sir Palomides, and sir Dinadan in prison, and speake we of the other knights that sought after sir Tristram in many divers parts of this land. And some went in Cornewaile. And by adventure sir Gaheris, nephew unto king Arthur, came unto king Marke, and there he was well received, and sate at king Markes owne table and eate of his owne meate¹. And then the king made a feast royall, and unto that feast came sir Ewaine le fise du roy Ureine, and some folke called him sir Ewaine les blaunce Mains. And this sir Ewaine challenged all the knights of Cornewaile. Then sir Andret, nephew unto king Marke, lept up and said, 'I will incounter with sir Ewaine.' Then sir Ewaine met with sir Andret, and smote him downe, that he sowned on the earth. So the king called unto him sir Dinas the seneshall, and prayed him for his sake to take upon him to just with sir Ewaine. So sir Dinas made him ready, and anon they encountred together with great speares, but sir Dinas was overthrown, horse and man, and had a great fall on the earth. 'Sir,' said Gaheris to king Marke, 'for your sake I will just.' So sir Gaheris made him ready, and when hee was armed hee rode forth into the field. And when sir Ewaine saw sir Gaheris shield, hee rode unto him and said: 'Sir, the first time that yee were made knight of the rounde table yee swore that yee would not have to do with your fellowship wittingly; and though ye would breake your oath, I will not breake mine; but I durst right well have to doe with you, and yet we bee sisters sonnes.' And so therewith every knight went his way, and sir Ewaine rode into the countrey. Then king Marke armed him and rode after sir Ewaine, and sudainly at a gap he ran upon him and there he smote him almost through the body, and there left him lying on the ground. So within a while there came sir Kay, and found sir Ewaine, and asked him how he was hurt. 'I wote not,' said sir Ewaine, 'why nor wherefore, but by treason I am sure I gat this hurt, for here came a knight upon mee or I was ware, and sudainly hurt me.' So sir Kay made sir Ewaine to be caried to the abbey of the black crosse, and there he was healed of his wounds. And then sir Gaheris took his leave of king Marke.

¹ *Owne meale.*—i. e. he was served from the same dish, a special mark of favour and honour.

CHAP. LXXIX.—*Of the treason of king Marke, and how sir Gaheris smote him downe and sir Andret his cosin.*

THEN there came sir Kay the seneshall unto king Marke, and there he had good cheere outwardly. 'Now, faire lords,' said king Marke, 'will yee goe prove any adventures in the forrest of Maris¹, in the which I know an hard adventure as I know any?' 'Sir,' said sir Kay, 'I will prove it.' And sir Gaheris said he would bee advised, for king Marke was alway full of treason. And therewith sir Gaheris departed by the same way that sir Kay should ride. So within a while sir Kay came riding that way. And then sir Gaheris tooke his horse and met him, and said, 'Sir Kay, yee are not wise to ride at the request of king Marke, for he dealeth all with treason.' Then sir Kay, 'I require you let us prove this adventure.' 'I shall not faile you,' said sir Gaheris. And so they rode that time to a lake, and there they abode under the shadow of the wood. The meane while king Marke within the castle of Tintagill let call his nephew sir Andret, and bad arme him and horse him lightly, and by that time it was midnight, and so at a privy posterne they two issued out with their berlets² with them, and rode till they came to the lake. Then sir Kay espied them first, and gat a speare and profered to just, and king Marke rode against him, and hit each other full hard, for the moone shone as faire as the bright day. And there at that justs sir Kais horse fell downe. Then sir Gaheris was full wroth that sir Kay had a fall. And then he cried, 'Sir knight, sit thou fast in thy saddle, for I will revenge my fellow if I can.' And sir Gaheris gave him such a strooke that he fell downe. So then forthwith sir Gaheris rode unto sir Andret, and smot him from his horse and had nigh broken his necke. And then sir Gaheris and sir Kay went both on foote to king Marke and sir Andret, and bad them for to yeeld them and tell them their names, or else they should die. And then with great paine sir Andret spake first, and said, 'This knight that smote downe sir Kay is king Marke of Cornewaile, and therfore beware what yee doe, and I am sir Andret his cosin.' 'Fie upon you both,' said sir Gaheris, 'for a false traytour, and false treason hast thou wrought and he both, under a fained cheere that yee made us; it were great pitie,' said sir Gaheris, 'that thou shouldest live any longer.' 'Save my life,' said king Marke, 'and I will make amends, and consider that I am a king anynted.' And therewith king Marke yeelded him unto sir Gaheris; and then he kneeled downe, and made his oath upon the crosse of the sword that never while he lived he would bee against arraunt knights³.

¹ *Maris*—*Merriis*, Caxton.

² *Berlets*.—*Varlets*, Caxton.

³ *Arraunt knights*.—*Knights errant*.

And also he swore to be good friend unto sir Tristram, if ever hee came into Cornewaile. By then sir Andret was on the earth, and sir Kay would have slaine him. 'Let be,' said sir Gaheris, 'sley him not, I pray you.' And therewith sir Kay let him goe. And so sir Kay and sir Gaheris rode unto the realme of Logris. And so within a little while they met with sir Launcelot, which had alwayes dame Bragwaine with him, for to have met the sooner with sir Tristram; and they told sir Launcelot word by word of their adventure; so sir Launcelot smiled, and said, 'Hard it is to take out of the flesh that is bred in the bone.' And so made them merry together.

CHAP. LXXX.—*How after that sir Tristram, and sir Palomides, and sir Dinadan had bene long in prison, they were delivered out.*

NOW sir Launcelot was right heavy that he could heare no tidings of sir Tristram; for all this while hee was in prison with sir Palomides and sir Dinadan. Then dame Bragwaine tooke her leave to goe into Cornewaile, and sir Launcelot, sir Kay, and sir Gaheris rode for to seeke sir Tristram in the country of Surluse. Now speaketh this tale of sir Tristram and of his two fellowes, for every day sir Palomides brawled and said language against sir Tristram. 'Sir Palomides,' said sir Tristram, 'I have heard much of your mauger¹ against mee, but I will not meddle with you at this time by my will, because I dread the lord of this place that hath us in governaunce, for and I dread him not more then I doe thee, soone should it be shift.' Then sir Tristram fell sicke, that he thought to have died. Then sir Dinadan wept, and so did sir Palomides, making great sorrow. So a damosell came into them, and found them mourning, and then she went to sir Darras and told him how the mighty knight that bare the blacke shield was likely for to die. And then anon, when sir Darras saw sir Tristram before him, he said, 'Sir knight, I me repent of thy sicknesse, for thou art called a full noble knight, and so it seemeth by thee. And wit ye well, it shall never be said that sir Darras hath destroyed such a noble knight as thou art in prison, how be it thou hast slaine three of my sonnes, whereby I was greatly agrieved. But now thou shalt goe hence, and thy fellowes; and all your harneis and your horses have bene faire and cleane kept, and ye shall goe wheresoever it please you, upon this covenant, that thou, sir knight, shalt promise me for to be good friend unto me and my sonnes that be on live, and also thou shalt shew and tell mee what is thy name, and of thy being?'

'Sir,' said he, 'as for mee, my name is sir Tristram de

¹ *Mauger.*—*Maugré* Caxton; i. e. ill-will.

Lyones, and in Cornewaile was I borne¹, and king Meliodas was my father, and I am nephew unto king Marke. And as for the death of your sonnes, and they had beene the next kinne that I have, I might have done non other wise. And if I had slaine them by treason or trechery, I had beene worthy to have died.' 'All this I consider,' said sir Darras, 'that all that yee did was by force of knighthood. But I pray you heartily for to bee my good friend and to my sonnes.' 'Sir,' said sir Tristram, 'I promise you by the faith of my body ever while I live I will doe you service, for ye have done to us but as a naturall knight ought to doe.' And then sir Tristram reposed him there till hee was amended of his sicknesse. And when he was whole and strong, they tooke their leave, and rode together till they came unto a crosse-way. 'Now fellows,' said sir Tristram, 'heere will wee depart in sundry wayes.' And because sir Dinadan had the first adventure, of him I will begin.

CHAP. LXXXI.—*How sir Dinadan rescued a lady from sir Breuse saunce Pittie, and how sir Tristram received a shield of Morgan le Fay.*

AND so as sir Dinadan rode by a well, he found a lady making great mone. 'Sir knight,' said the lady, 'I am the wofullest lady of the world, for within these five dayes here came a knight called sir Breuse saunce Pittie, and hee slew mine own brother, and ever sith hee hath kept mee at his owne will, and he will not tarry but will be heere anone.' 'Let him come,' said sir Dinadan, 'and I will doe my part.' With this came sir Breuse saunce Pitty, and when hee saw a knight with his lady, he was wood² wroth, and said to sir Dinadan, 'Sir knight, keepe³ thee from mee.' So they hurled together as thunder, and either smote other passing sore. But sir Dinadan put him through the shoulder a greivous wound, and or ever sir Dinadan might turne him to sir Breuse, hee was gone and fled. And then the lady prayed him to bring her to a castle foure mile thence. And so sir Dinadan brought her there, where shee was welcome, for the lord of that castle was her unkle. And so sir Dinadan rode his way upon his adventure.

Now turne wee this tale unto sir Tristram, that by adventure came to a castle to aske lodging, wherein was queene Morgan le Fay. And so when sir Tristram was let into that castle, hee had good cheere all that night. And on the morrow, when he would have departed, the queene said, 'Wit yee well yee shall

¹ *In Cornewaile was I borne.*—This is not quite in accordance with the accounts given in other parts of Tristram's story. But see p. 202.

² *Wood.*—Mad; furiously.

³ *Keepe.*—Defend yourself against me.

not depart lightly, for yee are here as a prisoner.' 'Jesu defend mee,' said sir Tristram, 'for I was but late agoe prisoner.' So the queene said to sir Tristram, 'Tell mee thy name, and I shall suffer thee to depart when thou wilt.' 'Upon that covenant I will tell you, my name is sir Tristram de Lyones.' 'Ah!' said Morgan le Fay, 'and I had wist that, thou shouldest not have departed as soone as thou shalt; but sithen I have made a promise, I will hold it, with that thou wilt promise mee to beare a shield upon thee, that I shall deliver thee, unto the castle of the Hard Roch, where king Arthur hath cryed a great tournament; and there I pray you that yee will bee, and to doe for mee as much deeds of armes as yee may doe.'

'For at that castle of Maidens, sir Tristram, yee did mervalous deeds of armes as ever I heard knight doe.' 'Madam,' said sir Tristram, 'let me see the shield that I shall beare.' So the shield was brought forth, and the shield was goldish¹, with a king and a queene therein painted, and a knight standing above them upon the kings head with one foote, and the other upon the queenes head. 'Madam,' said sir Tristram, 'this is a faire shield and a mightie; but what signifieth this king and this queene and that knight standing upon both their heads?' 'I shall tell you,' said Morgan le Fay, 'it signifieth king Arthur and queene Guenever, and a knight that holdeth them both in bondage and servage.' 'Who is that knight?' said sir Tristram. 'That shall yee not know at this time,' said the queene. So sir Tristram tooke that shield, and promised her to beare it at the tournament at the castle of the Heard Roch; but sir Tristram knew not that shield was ordained against sir Launcelot, but afterward he knew it.

CHAP. LXXXII.—*How sir Tristram praysed sir Launcelot and his kinne.*

NOW sir Tristram departed and came unto a faire manor, where abode an old knight, and there he lodged.

Now sir Tristram asked the knight his hoost if he saw of late any knight adventurous. 'Sir,' said hee, 'the last night here lodged with mee sir Ector de Maris and a damosell with him, and that damosell told mee that he was one of the best knights of the world.' 'It is not so,' said sir Tristram, 'for I know foure better knights of his owne blood; and the first is sir Launcelot du Lake, call him the best knight, and sir Bors de Ganis, sir Bleoberis, sir Blamor de Ganis, and sir Gaheris.'

'Nay,' said his hoost, 'sir Gawaine is a better knight then hee.' 'It is not so,' said sir Tristram, 'for I have met with them both, and I felt sir Gaheris for the better knight; and

¹ Goldish.—Guldysh, Caxton.

sir Lamoracke I call him as good as any of them, except sir Launcelot.' 'Why name ye not sir Tristram?' said his hoost, 'for I account him as good as any of them.' 'I know him not,' said sir Tristram. Thus they talked and bourded¹ as long as them list, and then they went to rest. And on the morrow sir Tristram departed; and so hee rested not till hee came to the castle, where hee saw a hundred² tents.

CHAP. LXXXIII. — *How sir Tristram at a turnament bare the shield that Morgan le Fay had delivered him.*

THEN the king of Scotland and the king of Ireland held against king Arthurs knights, and there began a great meddle. So came in sir Tristram rushing, and did mervailous deeds of armes, for hee smote downe many knights, and ever he was before king Arthur with that shield. And when king Arthur saw that shield, hee mervailed to what entent it was made. But queene Guenever deemed as it was, wherefore she was heavy. And then was there a damosell of queene Morgan in a chamber by king Arthur, and when she heard king Arthur speake of that shield, then shee spake openly to king Arthur: 'Sir king, wit ye well this shield was ordained for you to warne you of your shame and dishonour, and that belongeth to you and to your queene.' And then anon the damosell piked her away prively, that no man wist where shee was become; and then was king Arthur sad and wroth, and asked from whence that damosell came. There was not one that knew her, nor wist where shee was become. Then queene Guenever called to her sir Ector de Maris, and there shee made her complaint to him, and said, 'I wot well this shield was made by Morgan le Fay, in despite of mee and of sir Launcelot, wherefore I dread sore lest I should bee destroyed.' And ever the king beheld sir Tristram that did such deeds of armes, that hee wounded sore what hee might bee, and well hee wist it was not sir Launcelot. And it was told him that sir Tristram was in little Britaine with Isoud le blaunch Mains. But ever sir Tristram smote downe knights that it was great wonder to behold, both on the right hand and on the left hand, that uneth³ no knight might withstand him. When king Arthur espied that, hee thought that the knight with the strange shield should not escape him. So hee called unto him sir Ewaine⁴ le blaunch Mains, and bad him arme him and make him ready. So anone king Arthur and sir Ewaine dressed them before sir Tristram, and required him to tell them where hee had that shield. 'Sir,' said hee, 'I had it of queene Morgan le Fay, sister unto king Arthur.'

¹ *Bourded.*—Jested.

² *Uneth.*—Hardly.

³ *A hundred.*—Fyue c. tentys, Caxton.

⁴ *Ewaine.*—Gawayn, Ed. 1634.

CHAP. LXXXIV.—*How sir Tristram justed and smote downe king Arthur and sir Ewaine, and would not tell them his name.*

‘**T**HEN,’ said king Arthur, ‘if yee can describe what yee beare, ye be worthy to beare those armes.’ ‘As for that,’ said sir Tristram, ‘I will answere you. This shield was given me undesired of queene Morgan le Fay; as for me I cannot describe these armes, for it is no point of my charge, and yet I trust to God to beare them with worship.’ ‘Truely,’ said king Arthur, ‘yee ought not to beare no armes, but if ye wist what ye beare. But I pray you tell me your name.’ ‘Sir,’ said sir Tristram, ‘yee shall not wit as at this time.’ ‘Then shall ye and I doe battaile together,’ said king Arthur. And therewithall king Arthur dressed his shield and his speare, and sir Tristram against him, and then they came right egerly together. And there king Arthur brake his speare upon sir Tristrams shield. But sir Tristram hit king Arthur againe, that horse and man fell to the ground. And there was king Arthur wounded on the left side a great wound and a perillous. Then when sir Ewaine saw that his lord king Arthur lay upon the ground sore wounded, he was passing heavy. And then hee dressed his shield and his speare, and cryed aloud unto sir Tristram, and said, ‘Sir knight, defend thee.’ So they came together as thunder, and sir Ewaine brake his speare upon sir Tristrams shield all to peeces. And sir Tristram smote him harder and sorer with such a might that hee bare him cleane out of his saddle, that he fell downe to the earth. Then arose king Arthur, and went unto sir Ewaine, and said to sir Tristram, ‘Wee have as wee have deserved, for through our pride wee demaunded battaile of you, and yet wee knew not your name.’ ‘Neverthesse,’ said sir Ewaine, ‘by the holy roode, hee is a strong knight in mine advise as any now living.’ Then sir Tristram departed, and rode by a forrest, and then was he ware of a faire towre by a maries¹ on that one side, and on that other side a faire meddow; and there hee saw tenne knights fighting together. And ever the neerer hee came, hee saw how there was but one knight did battaile against nine knights, the leader whereof hight sir Breuse saunce Pittie, and that one knight did so mervailously that sir Tristram had great wonder that ever one knight might doe so great deeds of armes.

And then within a little while hee had slaine halfe their horses and unhorsed them, and their horses ranne into the fields and forrest. Then sir Tristram had great pittie upon that one knight that endured so great paine, and ever hee thought it should bee sir Palomides by his shield.

¹ *Maries.*—A marsh.

CHAP. LXXXV.—*How sir Tristram and sir Palomides met, and how they promised to fight together within fourteene dayes after.*

SO sir Tristram alighted from his horse, because they were on foote, that they should not slay his horse. And then hee smote passing sore, that well nigh at every strooke he strake downe a knight. And when they had felt his strookes, they fled all into the towre, and shut sir Tristram without the gate. And when sir Tristram saw this, hee turned backe unto sir Palomides, and found him sitting under a tree, sore wounded. 'Gramercy, sir,' said sir Palomides, 'of your great goodnesse, for yee have rescued mee of my life, and saved mee from death.' 'What is your name?' said sir Tristram. 'Sir,' said hee, 'my name is sir Palomides.' 'O Jesu,' said sir Tristram, 'thou hast a faire grace of me this day; but now make thee ready, for I will doe battaile with thee.' 'What is your name?' said sir Palomides. 'My name is sir Tristram, your mortall enemy.' 'It may bee so,' said sir Palomides, 'but ye have done overmuch for mee this day that I should fight with you; and therefore, and yee will needs have to doe with mee, assigne me a day, and I shall meete with you without any faile.' 'Yee say well,' said sir Tristram; 'now I assigne you to meete me in the medow by the river of Camelot, where Merlin set the peron¹.' So they were both agreed. Then sir Tristram asked sir Palomides why those nine knights did battaile with him. 'For this cause,' said sir Palomides; 'as I rode on mine adventures in a forrest heere beside, I espied where as lay a dead knight, and a lady weeping beside him; and I asked her who slew her lord?' 'Sir,' said she, 'the most falsest of the world now living; and men call him sir Breuse saunce Pittie.'

'Then for pitie I made the damosel to leape upon her palfray, and I promised her to be her warrant and to helpe her for to bury her lord. And so sodainely, as I came riding by this tower, there came out sir Breuse saunce Pittie, and sodainely hee strooke me from my horse. And then, or that I might recover my horse againe, this knight sir Breuse slew the damosell. And this is the cause wherefore wee did this battaile.' So they mounted upon their horses, and rode together into that forrest, and there they found a faire well with cleare water burbeling. And then they alighted from their horses, and then were they ware by them where stood a great horse tied to a tree, and ever he neyed; and then were they ware of a faire knight armed under a tree, lacking no peece of harneys, save his helme lay under his head. So sir Tristram wakned him with the end of his speare. And so the knight arose up hastily,

¹ *Peron*.—The tomb-stone. See before, book i. p. 91; and a subsequent chapter of the present book, p. 282.

and put his helme on his head, and without any moe words hee hurled unto sir Tristram, and smote him cleane from his saddle to the earth, and hurt him on the left side, that sir Tristram lay in great perill. Then he galloped farther, and set his course, and came hurling upon sir Palomides, and there he strooke him a part through the body, that he fell from his horse unto the ground. And then this strange knight left them there, and tooke his way through the forrest. With this sir Palomides and sir Tristram were on foote, and gat their horses againe. and either asked counsaile of other what was best to doe. 'By my head,' said sir Tristram, 'I will follow after this strong knight that thus hath shamed us.' 'Well,' said sir Palomides, 'and I will rest mee heereby with a friend of mine.' Right so sir Tristram and sir Palomides departed asunder, and either tooke divers waies.

CHAP. LXXXVI.—*How sir Tristram sought the strong knight that had smitten him downe, and many other knights of the round table.*

SO sir Tristram rode long after this strong knight, and at the last he saw where as lay a lady overthwart a dead knight. 'Faire lady,' said sir Tristram, 'who hath slaine your lord?' 'Sir,' said shee, 'heere came a knight riding, as my lord and I rested us heere, and asked him of whence he was, and my lord said, 'Of king Arthurs court.' 'Therefore,' said the strong knight, 'I will just with thee, for I hate all those that be of king Arthurs court.' And the strong knight and my lord encountred together, and there he smote my lord throughout the body with his speare, and thus he hath brought me in great woe and damage.' 'That me repenteth,' said sir Tristram, 'of your great woe, but I require you tell me your lords name.' 'Sir,' said she, 'his name is sir Galardoun, that would have proved a good knight.' So departed sir Tristram from that dolorous lady, and had good lodging¹. Then on the third day sir Tristram met with sir Gawaine and with sir Bleoberis, in a forrest at a lodge, and either were sore wounded. Then sir Tristram asked sir Gawaine and sir Bleoberis if they met with such a knight with such a cognisaunce with a covered shield. 'Faire sir,' said those knights, 'such a knight met with us to our great dammage, and first he smote downe my fellow sir Bleoberis, and sore wounded him; and when hee had done so, I might not for shame but I must just with him. And at the first course he cast me downe and my horse to the earth, and there hee had almost slaine me.' 'Faire knights,' said sir Tristram, 'so hee met with mee, and with sir Palomides, and hee smote us both downe with one speare, and hurt us full

¹ *Had good lodging.*—Caxton's text has, on the contrary, *and hadde moche evylle lodging*.

sore.' And then sir Gawaine asked him his name, and hee answered, 'My name is sir Tristram de Lyones.' And so either told other their names. And then departed sir Tristram, and rode forth his way. And by fortune in a meddow sir Tristram met with sir Kay the seneshall and sir Dinadan. 'What tidings with you, faire knights?' said sir Tristram, 'I pray you tell mee, for I ride to seeke a knight.' 'What cognisance beareth hee?' said sir Kay. 'Hee beareth,' said sir Tristram, 'a covered shield close with a cloth.' 'By my head,' said sir Kay, 'that is the same knight that met with us, for this night wee were lodged within a widdowes house, and there was that same knight lodged. And when hee wist that wee were of king Arthurs court, hee spake of the king great vilany, and especially of queen Guenever. And then on the morrow wee waged battaile for the same cause with him; and at the first encounter he smote me downe from my horse, and hurt me passing sore. And when my fellow, sir Dinadan, saw mee so smitten downe and hurt, hee would in no wise revenge mee, but fled fast away from mee.' And so either told other their names. And sir Tristram departed, and passed through a great forrest into a plaine, till he was ware of a priory, and there rested him with a good man sixe dayes.

CHAP. LXXXVII.—*How sir Tristram smote down sir Sagramore le Desirous and sir Dodinas le Savage.*

AND then hee sent his man that hight Governale, and commanded him to goe to a citie there beside to fetch him new harneis, for his harneis was bruised and broken. And when Governale his servant was come with his apparell, hee rode his way early in the morning. And by suddaine adventure sir Tristram met with sir Sagramore le Desirous and with sir Dodinas le Savage. And when these two knights met with sir Tristram, they questioned with him, and asked him if hee would just with them. And then they dressed their shields, and came running together with great ire. But sir Tristram strooke both sir Sagramore and sir Dodinas from their horses. And when hee saw them both lye on the ground, hee rode forth on his way, and his man Governale with him. So anon, as sir Tristram was past, sir Sagramore and sir Dodinas gat againe their horses, and mounted up lightly, and followed after sir Tristram as fast as they could. And when sir Tristram saw them come so fast after him, hee returned with his horse unto them. 'Faire knights,' said sir Tristram, 'all that I did to you yee caused me to doe it, wherefore I require you of your knighthood leave me at this time; for I must fight within these three dayes with as good a knight and as valiant as any is now living.' 'What knight is that,' said sir Sagramore and sir

Dodinas, 'that yee shall fight with?' 'Faire knights,' said sir Tristram, 'it is a good knight called sir Palomides.' 'By my head,' said sir Sagramore and sir Dodinas, 'ye have cause to dread him, for yee shall find him a passing good knight and a valiant. And because ye shall have to doe with him, wee will forbear you as at this time, and else yee should not lightly escape from us. But, gentle knight,' said sir Sagramore, 'tell us your name?' 'Sir,' said hee, 'my name is sir Tristram de Lyones.' 'Ah!' said sir Sagramore and sir Dodinas, 'well be ye found, for much worship have we heard of you.' And then either tooke their leave of other, and departed forth on their way.

CHAP. LXXXVIII.—*How sir Tristram met at the Peron with sir Launce-
lot, and how they fought together, not knowing the one the other.*

THEN departed sir Tristram, and rode straight unto Camelot, to the peron which Merlin had made before, where sir Lancelot (that was the kings sonne of Ireland) was slaine by the hands of Balin. And in the same place was the faire Columbe slaine, that which was love untō sir Lancelot; for after he was dead, she tooke his sword and thrust it through her body. And at that time Merlin prophecied, that in that same place should fight two of the best knights that ever were in king Arthurs days and the truest lovers. So when sir Tristram came to the tombe where sir Launceor and his lady were there buried, hee looked about after sir Palomides. Then was hee ware of a seemely knight that came riding against him all in white, with a covered shield; when he came nigh unto sir Tristram, hee said on high, 'Yee bee welcome, sir knight, and well and truly have yee holden your promise.' And then they two fought the space of foure houres, that neither of them would speake unto other one word. Then at the last spake sir Launcelot, and said, 'Sir knight, yee fight wondrous well as ever I saw knight, therefore I require you, if it please you, tell me your name.' Then said sir Tristram, 'I am full loth to tell any man my name.' 'Truely,' said sir Launcelot, 'and I were required, I was never loth to tell my name.' 'It is well said,' quoth sir Tristram; 'then I require you tell me your name.' 'Sir,' said he, 'my name is sir Launcelot du Lake.' 'Alas!' said sir Tristram, 'what have I done? for ye are the man in the world that I most love.' 'Now, faire knight,' said sir Launcelot, 'tell me your name.' 'Truely,' said he, 'my name is sir Tristram de Lyones.' 'Oh, Jesu,' said sir Launcelot, 'what adventure is now befallen mee?' And therewithall sir Launcelot kneeled downe and yelded him up his sword. And so either gave other the degree¹. And then they both forth-

¹ *The degree.*—The precedence; the gree or prize.

with went to the stone, and set them downe upon it, and tooke off their helmes for to keele¹ them, and either kissed other an hundred times. And then anon after they tooke up their helmes, and rode straight unto Camelot, and there met with sir Gawaine and sir Gaheris, which made promise unto king Arthur never to come againe to the court till they had brought sir Tristram with them.

CHAP. LXXXIX.—*How sir Launcelot brought sir Tristram to the court, and of the great joy that king Arthur and other made for the comming of sir Tristram.*

‘RETURNE againe,’ said sir Launcelot, ‘for your quest is done, for I have met with sir Tristram; loe, here is his owne person.’ With this came king Arthur, and when hee wist that sir Tristram was there, then hee ranne unto him, and tooke him by the hand, and said, ‘Sir Tristram, yee bee as welcome as any knight that ever came unto this court.’ Then sir Tristram told the king how hee came thither for to have had to doe with sir Palomides.

And then hee told the king how hee had rescewed him from nine knights and sir Breuse saunce Pitie, and hee found a knight lying by a well, ‘and that knight smote downe sir Palomides and mee, but his shield was covered with a cloth. So sir Palomides left me, and I followed after that knight, and in many places I found where as he had slayne many knights, and had also forjusted many.’ ‘By my head,’ said sir Gawaine, ‘that same knight smote mee downe and sir Bleoberis, and hurt us both wounderous sore.’ ‘Ah!’ said sir Kay, ‘that same knight smot me downe and hurt me passing sore; and faine would I have knowne him, but I might not.’ ‘Now,’ said king Arthur, ‘if yee know not, then doe I, for I assure you that it was sir Launcelot du Lake.’ Then all together at once looked upon sir Launcelot, and said, ‘Yee have beguiled us with your covered shield.’ ‘It is not the first time,’ said king Arthur, ‘that hee hath done so.’ ‘My lord,’ said sir Launcelot, ‘truely wit yee well I was the same knight that bare the covered shield; and because I would not be knowne that I was of your court, I said no worship of your court.’ Then king Arthur tooke sir Tristram by the hand, and led him unto the round table. Then came queene Guenever, and many ladies with her, and all these ladies said, all with one voice, ‘Welcome, sir Tristram;’ ‘Welcome,’ said the damosels; ‘Welcome,’ said the knights; ‘Welcome,’ said king Arthur, ‘for one of the best knights and gentilest of the world, and knight of the most worship. And I pray you graunt me a boone.’ ‘It shall bee at

¹ *Keale*.—Cool; refresh.

your commandement,' said sir Tristram. 'Well,' said king Arthur, 'I will desire of you that yee will abide in my court.' 'Sir,' said sir Tristram, 'I will as ye will.' Then went king Arthur unto the sieges¹ about the rounde table, and looked in every siege which were voide that lacked knights. And the king then saw in the siege of Marhaus letters that said:—

'This is the siege of the noblest knight sir Tristram.' And then king Arthur made sir Tristram knight of the round table, with great noblenesse and great feast, as might bee thought.

CHAP. XC.—*How, for the despite of sir Tristram, king Marke came with two knights into England, and how he slew one of his knights.*

THEN king Marke had great despit of the renowne of sir Tristram. And hee had great suspicion on sir Tristram for his queene La beale Isoude; for him seemed there was too much love betweene them. So when sir Tristram went out of Cornewaile into England, king Marke sent on his part men to espie what deeds he did. And the queene sent prively on her part spies for to know what deeds hee had done, for great love was betweene them twaine. So when the messengers were come home, they told the truth as they heard, that he passed all other knights, but if it were the noble knight sir Launcelot. Then king Mark was right hevie of these tidings, and the queene La beale Isoud was passing glad. Then in great despite he tooke with him two good knights and two squires, and disguised himselfe, and tooke his way into England, to the entent to sley sir Tristram. And one of these two knights hight sir Bersules, and that other knight was called sir Amant. Then said king Marke unto his two knights: 'Now will I tell you my counsell, yee are the men that I trust most unto on live; and I will that yee wit, my comming hither is to this entent, for to destroy sir Tristram by wiles or by treason; and it shall be hard if hee ever escape our hands.' 'Alas!' said sir Bersules, 'what thing meane yee? I warne you plainly I will never consent for to doe him to death, and therefore I will yeeld my service and forsake you.' When king Marke heard him say so, sodeinly he drew his sword and said, 'A! false traitour!' and smote sir Bersules on the head, so that his sword went to his teeth. When sir Amant the knight saw him doe that villainous deed and his squires, they said al it was foul done and mischevously, 'wherefore wee will doe no more service; and wit thou well wee will apeach thee of treason before king Arthur.' Then was king Marke wonders wroth, and would have slaine sir Amant; but hee and the two squiers held them together, and set nought by his malice. When king

¹ Sieges.—Seats.

Marke saw he might not bee revenged on them, he said thus unto sir Amant: 'Wit thou well, and thou appeach mee of treason, I shall never defend me afore king Arthur; but I require thee thou tel not my name that I am king Marke, what soever come of me.' 'As for that,' said sir Amant, 'I will not discover your name.' And so they departed. And sir Amant and his fellowes tooke the body of sir Bersules and buried it.

CHAP. XCI.—*How king Marke came to a fountaine, where as he found sir Lamoracke complaining for the love of king Lots wife.*

THEN king Marke rode till hee came to a fountaine, and there he reposed him. And as he thus rested him by that fountaine, there came by him a knight, and he alighted and tied his horse unto a tree, and sate him downe by the bancke¹ of the fountaine, and there hee made the pittifullest complaint of love that ever man heard; and all this while was hee not ware of king Marke, and this was a great part of his complaint: hee cryed and wept, saying, 'O faire queene of Orkeney, for your love I am in great paine.' Then king Marke arose, and went neere to him, and said, 'Knight, yee have made a pitious complaint. I require you, tell me your name.' 'Sir,' said he, 'as for my name I will not hide it from no knight that beareth shield, and my name is sir Lamoracke de Ganis.' But when sir Lamoracke heard king Marke speake, then wist he well by his speach that he was a Cornish knight. 'Sir,' said sir Lamoracke, 'I understand by your tongue yee are of Cornewaile, wherein dwelleth the shamefullest king that liveth. It is pitie, that ever such a false knight coward as king Marke is should bee matched with such a faire lady and good as La beale Isoude is; for all the world speaketh of her worship as any queene may have.' Then came there a knight that was called sir Dinadan, and he saluted them both. And when hee wist that king Marke was a knight of Cornewaile, he reproved him for the love of king Marke a thousand fold more then did sir Lamoracke. Then hee proffred to just with king Marke, and hee was full loth thereto; but sir Dinadan egged him so, that hee justed with sir Lamoracke. And sir Lamoracke anon smote king Marke so sore on the shield that hee beare him on the speare end over his horse croupe. And then king Marke arose againe, and followed after sir Lamoracke. But sir Dinadan would not just with sir Lamoracke, but hee told king Marke that sir Lamoracke was sir Kay the seneshall. 'That is not so,' said king Marke, 'for he is much bigger then sir Kay.' And so he followed after and overtooke him, and then hee bad him abide. 'What will yee

¹ Bancke.—*Brynke*, Caxton.

doe?' said sir Lamoracke. 'Sir,' said hee, 'I will fight with a sword, for yee have shamed me with your speare.' And therewith they dashed together, and sir Lamoracke beate him so sore upon the helme, that his head hung nigh unto the saddle bow. When sir Lamoracke saw him fare so, thus he said: Sir knight, yee are but a meane knight, therefore I give you leave for to goe where as yee list.' 'Sir, gramercy,' said king Marke, 'for you and I are not matches.' Then sir Dinadan mocked with king Marke, and said to him, 'Yee are not able for to match a good knight.' 'As for that,' said king Marke, 'at the first time that I justed with this knight yee refused him.' 'Thinke yee that it is a shame to mee?' said sir Dinadan. 'Nay, sir, it is ever worship unto a knight for to refuse that thing the which hee may not attaine. For I warne you plainly he is able to beate such five as you and I bee; for yee knights of Cornewaile be no men of worship as other knights are, and never was there bred in your countrey such a knight as is sir Tristram.'

CHAP. XCII.—*How king Marke, sir Lamoracke, and sir Dinadan, came into a castle, and how king Marke was knowne there.*

THEN they rode forth all together, till that they came unto a bridge; and at the end of that bridge stood a faire toure. Then saw they a knight on horsebacke well armed, braundishing a speare, crying and proffering himselfe to just. 'Now,' said sir Dinadan unto king Marke, 'yonder are two brethren, and the one is called sir Alleine, and that other is called sir Trian, that will just with any that passeth this passage; now proffer your selfe, for alwayes yee are laid to the ground.' Then was king Marke ashamed, and therewith hee feutred his speare and ranne against sir Trian, and there either bracke their speares all to peeces, and passed through anon. Then sir Trian sent to king Marke another speare for to just more, but in no wise would he just againe. Then they came into the castle all three knights, and they prayed the lord of the castle of harbour. 'Yee are heartily welcome,' said the knights of the castle, 'for the love of the lord of this castle, that hight sir Tor¹ le fise Aries.' And they came into a faire court, well repaired. And they had passing good cheere, till the lieutenant of the castle (that was called sir Berluses) espied king Marke of Cornewaile. Then said sir Berluses, 'Sir knight, I know you better then yee weene, for yee are king Marke, that slew my father before mine eyes, and also yee would have slaine mee if I had not escaped into a wood; but wit yee well that when yee bee past this lodging I will hurt you and I may; but first for the love of sir Lamoracke, that honourable knight that here is lodged, ye shall have none evill lodging.

¹ *Sir Tor*.—See on this individual, book i. pp. 101-107.

CHAP. XCIII.—*How sir Berluses met with king Marke, and how sir Dinadan tooke his part.*

THEN was king Marke sore ashamed, and said but little againe. But when sir Lamoracke and sir Dinadan wist that it was king Marke, they were sorrie of his fellowship. And on the morrow they arose early, and king Marke and sir Dinadan rode together. And three mile from their lodging there met with them three knights, and sir Berluses was one, and the two other his two cosins. Sir Berluses saw king Marke, and then he cryed on high, 'Traytour, keepe thee from mee, for wit thou well that I am Berluses.' 'Sir knight,' said sir Dinadan, 'I counsell thee to leave off at this time, for hee goeth unto king Arthur, and because I have promised to conduct him unto my lord king Arthur, needs I must take his part, how be it I love not his conditions, and faine I would bee from him.' 'Well, sir Dinadan,' said sir Berluses, 'me repenteth that ye will take part with him, but now doe your best.' And then he hurled unto king Marke, and smote him sore upon the helme, that he bare him cleane out of his saddle to the earth. That saw sir Dinadan, and hee feutred his speare, and ranne to one of sir Berluses fellowes, and smote him downe out of his saddle. Then sir Dinadan turned his horse, and smote the third knight in the same wise to the earth, for sir Dinadan was a good knight on horsebacke; and there began a great battaile, for sir Berluses and his fellowes held them together strongly on foote. And so through the great force of sir Dinadan, king Marke had sir Berluses to the earth, and his fellowes fled; and had not beene sir Dinadan, king Marke would have slaine him. And so they tooke their horses and departed, and left sir Berluses sore wounded. When king Marke and sir Dinadan had ridden about foure mile¹, they came unto a bridge where as hoved a knight on horsebacke and ready to just. Then sir Dinadan might not refuse him in no manner; and then either dressed their speares and their shields, and smote together, so that sir Dinadan was smitten to the earth; and lightly hee arose up againe, and required that knight for to doe battaile with their swords. And he answered and said: 'Faire knight, as at this time I may not have to doe with you no more, for the custome of this passage is such.' And in no wise would that knight tell his name; but ever sir Dinadan thought that hee should know him by his shield that it should bee sir Tor.

¹ *Foure mile.*—*A four leges Englysshe*, Caxton. It would seem from this that an English league and a mile were equivalent.

CHAP. XCIV.—*How king Marke mocked sir Dinadan, and how they met with six knights of the round table.*

SO as they rode on their way, king Marke then began for to mocke sir Dinadan, and said to him, 'I wend ye knights of the round table might in no wise find their matches.' 'Yee say well,' said sir Dinadan, 'as for you, on my life I call you none of the best knights; but sith yee have such a despite at mee, I require you to just with me for to prove my strength.' 'Not so,' said king Marke, 'for I will not have to doe with you in no manner of wise; but I require you of one thing, that when yee come unto king Arthurs court, yee discover not my name, for I am there sore hated.' Thus they rode forth talking till they came unto a faire place, where as stode a knight, and hee praied them to take their lodging with him. So at the request of the knight they rested them there; for all arraunt knights were welcome to him, and especially all those knights that were of king Arthurs court. Then sir Dinadan demanded of his hoost what was the knights name that kept the bridge. 'For it is not yet long agoe,' said sir Dinadan, 'sith that I justed with him, and hee gave me a fall.' 'Ah, faire knight,' said his hoost, 'thereof yee ought to have no mervaille, for hee is a passing good knight, and his name is sir Tor, sonne of Aries le Vassher.' 'Ah!' said sir Dinadan, 'was that sir Tor? for truely so me thought ever.' Right so as they stood thus talking together, they saw comming riding toward them over a plaine six knights of king Arthurs court, well armed at all points, and there by their shields sir Dinadan knew them well. The first was sir Ewaine, the sonne of king Uriens; the second was sir Brandiles; the third was Ozana le Cuer-hardy; the fourth was sir Ewaine les Adventurous; the fifth was sir Agravaire; the sixth was sir Mordred brother to sir Gawaine.

Then was king Marke ware where they sat all six about a well, and eate and dranke such meate as they had, and their horses walking, and some were tied, and their shields being in divers places about them. 'Loe,' said sir Dinadan, 'yonder I see knights arraunt that will just with us.' 'God forbid,' said king Marke, 'for they beene six, and we are but two.' 'As for that,' said sir Dinadan, 'let us not spare, for I will assay the foremost.' And therewith he made him ready. When king Marke saw him so doe, as fast as sir Dinadan rode toward them, king Marke rode from them with all his might. So when sir Dinadan saw that king Marke was gone, he set his speare out of the rest, and threw the shield upon his backe, and came riding to fellowship of the round table. And anon sir Ewaine knew sir Dinadan, and welcomed him, and so did all his fellowship.

CHAP. XCV.—*How the six knights set sir Dagonet to just with king Marke, and how king Marke refused him.*

AND they asked him of his adventures. 'What knight is that,' said sir Brandiles, 'that suddainly departed from you and rode over yonder field?' 'Sir,' said hee, 'it is a knight of Cornewaile, and the most horrible coward that ever bestrod horse.' So when they had rested them and spoken together, they tooke their horses, and rode to a castle where dwelled an old knight that made all arraunt knights good cheere. Then came into the castle sir Griflet le fise de Dieu. So as sir Dinadan walked and beheld the castle, thereby in a chamber hee espied king Marke, and then he rebuked him, and asked why he departed so. 'Sir,' said hee, 'for I durst not abide because there were so many. Who is captaine of that fellowship?' Then for to feare him sir Dinadan said it was sir Launcelot: 'Oh, Jesu,' said king Marke, 'might I know sir Launcelot by his shield?' 'Yea,' said sir Dinadan, 'for hee beareth a shield of silver and blacke bends.' Right so sir Dinadan went from king Marke, and went to his owne fellowship; and so they rode forth their way, talking of the Cornish knight. For sir Dinadan told them that hee was in the castle where as they were lodged. 'It is well said,' quoth sir Griflet, 'for here have I brought sir Dagonet, king Arthurs foole, that is the best fellow and meriest in the world.' 'Well, yee doe well,' said sir Dinadan; 'I have told the Cornish knight that here is sir Launcelot, and the Cornish knight asked me what shield hee beare; truely I told him that hee beare the same shield that sir Mordred beareth.' 'Will yee doe well?' said sir Mordred: 'I am hurt and may not well beare my shield nor my harneis, and therefore put my shield and harneis upon sir Dagonet, and let him set upon the Cornish knight.'

Then anon sir Dagonet was armed in sir Mordreds harneis and his shield, and he was set upon a great horse, and a speare in his hand. So all these knights rode unto a woods side, and abode till king Marke came by the way. Then they put forth sir Dagonet, and hee came on as fast as his horse might runne streight to king Marke. Anon as king Marke beheld his shield he said to himselfe, 'Yonder is sir Launcelot; alas, now I am destroyed.' And therewith hee made his horse to runne as fast as hee might through thicke and thinne. And when sir Ewaine and sir Brandiles saw sir Dagonet chase so king Marke, they tooke their horses and followed with great laughter, for to see how sir Dagonet sped; for they would not for no good that sir Dagonet were hurt, for king Arthur loved him passing well, and made him knight with his owne hands, and at every turneyment he made king Arthur laugh.



CHAP. XCVI.—*How sir Palomides by adventure met with king Marke flying, and how he overthrew sir Dagonet and other knights.*

SO king Marke rode by fortune by a well in that way, where stood a knight arraunt on horsebacke, armed at all points, with a great speare in his hand. And when he saw king Marke come flying, he said, 'Knight, returne againe for shame, and stand with me, and I shall be thy warrant¹.' When king Marke heard him say so, hee turned his horse and abode by him. And then that strong knight beare a spear against sir Dagonet, and smote him so sore that he beare him over his horse taile, and neere hand had broken his necke. And anon after him came sir Brandiles, and then sir Ewaine, and then Ozana with the hardy heart; but the knight smote them all from their horses. 'Now,' said sir Griflet, 'by my counsaile, let us send unto yonder knight arraunt, and wit whether hee be of king Arthurs court, for I deeme it is sir Lamoracke de Galis.' So they sent unto him, and prayed the strange knight to tell his name, and whether he were of king Arthurs court or not. 'As for my name, they shall not wit, but tell them that I am a knight arraunt as they are, and let them wit that I am no knight of king Arthurs court.' And so the squier rode againe to them, and rehearsed unto them his answer. So sir Agrawaine feutred his speare, and that other was ready and smote him downe over his horse taile to the earth. And in the same wise he smote sir Ewaine les Avoutres, and sir Griflet. Then had hee served them all but onely sir Dinadan, for hee was behind the other company, and sir Mordred, for hee was unarmed. So when this was done, the strong knight rode on his way a soft pace. And alwayes king Marke rode after him, praising him much; but hee sighed wonderous sore, taking no heed to the words that king Marke said. Thus they rode well a three mile English, and then this knight called to him a page², and said to him, 'Ride lightly unto yonder manner that standeth so faire, and recommend mee unto the lady of that manner, and pray her for to send mee some refreshing of good meates and drinckes; and if shee aske thee what knight that I am, tell her that I am the knight that followeth the questing beast.' And then the page went and saluted the lady, and told her from whence hee came. And when she understood that hee came from the knight which followed the questing beast, 'O sweete Jesu,' said shee, 'when shall I see the noble knight, my deere sonne sir Palomides? alas! will hee not abide with me?' And then, as soon as she might, shee gave the varlet all that hee asked. And then the varlet returned unto sir Palomides, for hee was a varlet of king

¹ *Warrant*.—Security; defence.

² *A page*.—A varlette, Caxton.

Marke. And as soone as hee came, hee told that the knights name was sir Palomides. 'I am well pleased,' said king Marke, 'but hold thee still and say nothing.' Then they alighted, and set downe, and reposed them a while. And anon therewith king Marke fell on sleepe. When sir Palomides saw him sound on sleepe, hee tooke his horse and rode forth a great pace.

CHAP. XCVII.—*How king Marke and sir Dinadan heard sir Palomides making great sorrow and mourning for La beale Isoude.*

NOW returne wee unto sir Dinadan, that found these seven knights passing heavy; and when hee wist how they had sped, hee was as heavy as they. 'My lord sir Ewainè,' said sir Dinadan, 'I dare lay my head it is sir Lamoracke de Galis; I promise you all that I shall find him, and hee may bee found in this countrey.' And so sir Dinadan rode after this knight; and so did king Marke, that sought him through the forrest. So as king Marke rode after sir Palomides, he heard a noise of a man that made great dole. Then king Marke rode as nigh that noise as hee might, and as hee durst. Then was he ware of a knight that was descended off his horse, and had put of his helme, and there hee made a piteous complaint and a dolorous of love.

Now leave we of that, and talke wee of sir Dinadan, which rode to seeke sir Palomides. Right so as sir Dinadan rode late in an evening, hee heard a dolefull noyse, as it were of a man. Then sir Dinadan was ware of a knight that stood under a tree, and his horse tied by him, and the helme of his head; and alwaies that knight made a dolefull complaint as ever made knight. And alwaies hee made his complaint of La beale Isoud, the queene of Cornewaile, and said: 'Ah, faire lady, why love I thee? for thou art the fairest lady of all other ladies, and yet shewed you never love to me nor bountie; and yet must I love you. Alas! that ever so faire a lady and pearlesse should be matched with the most vilainous king and knight of the world.' All this language heard king Marke, what sir Palomides said by him; wherefore he was adread when hee saw sir Dinadan, that hee would tell sir Palomides that it was king Marke; and therefore hee withdrew him, and tooke his horse and rode to his men where as hee had commanded them for to abide, and so he rode as fast as hee might to Camelot. And the same day hee found there sir Amant the knight, there ready, that before king Arthur had appealed him of treason. And so lightly king Arthur commanded them to doe battaile together, and by misadventure king Marke smote sir Amant through the body, and yet was sir Amant in the rightwise quarrell.

And right so hee tooke his horse, and departed from the court,

for dread of sir Dinadan, that hee would tell sir Tristram and sir Palomides what hee was. Then were there maidens which La beale Isoud had sent to sir Tristram that knew sir Amant well.

CHAP. XCVIII.—*How king Marke had slaine sir Amant wrongfully before king Arthur, and how sir Launcelot fetcht king Marke to king Arthur.*

THEN, by the licence of king Arthur, they went unto him, and spake with him, for while the troncheon of the speare strake within his body hee spake : ' Ah, faire damosels,' said he, ' recommend mee unto La beale Isoud, and tell her that I am slaine for the love of her and of sir Tristram.' And there he told the damosels how cowardly king Marke had slaine him and sir Bersules his fellow, because they would not consent to slay sir Tristram by treason. Then anon sprang unto the king and the queene, and unto lords and ladies, that it was king Marke that had slaine sir Amant and sir Bersules afore hand, wherefore they did their battaile. Then was king Arthur wroth out of measure, and so were all the other knights. When sir Launcelot espied that sir Tristram wept, hee went hastily unto king Arthur, and said, ' Sir, I pray you give mee leave to returne againe yonder false king and knight king Marke.' ' I require you,' said king Arthur, ' fetch him againe to mee ; but I would not that yee slew him, for my worship.' Then sir Launcelot rode after king Marke. And from thence a three mile English, sir Launcelot overtooke him. King Marke returned, and looked upon sir Launcelot, and said : ' Faire sir, what is your name ?' ' Wit thou well,' said hee, ' my name is sir Launcelot du Lake, and therefore defend thee.' And so king Marke cryed then aloud and said : ' I yeeld me unto thee, honourable knight sir Launcelot.' But sir Launcelot would not heere him, but came fast upon him. King Marke saw that, and made no defence, but tumbled downe out of his saddle to the earth as a sacke, and there he lay still, and cryed sir Launcelot mercy. ' Arise, recreant knight and king,' said sir Launcelot. ' I will not fight,' said the king, ' but whither ye will, I will goe with you.' ' Alas, alas,' said sir Launcelot, ' that I may not give thee one buffet for the love of sir Tristram and of La beale Isoud, and for the two knights that thou hast slaine trayterously.' And so he mounted upon his horse, and brought him unto king Arthurs court. And there king Marke alighted in the same place, and threw his helme from his head upon the earth and his sword, and fell flat unto the earth before king Arthurs feete, and put him in his grace and mercy. ' Sir,' said king Marke, ' right as your highnesse will require me to my power, I will make a large amends ;' for hee was a faire speaker and a false dissembler. Then for

great pleasure of sir Tristram, to make them two accorded, the king withheld king Marke as at that time, and made a broken love day¹ betweene them.

CHAP. XCIX.—*How sir Dinadan told sir Palomides of the battaile betweene sir Launcelot and sir Tristram.*

NOW turne wee againe unto sir Palomides, how sir Dinadan comforted him in all that ever he might from his great sorrow. 'What knight be yee?' said sir Palomides. 'Sir, I am a knight errant as yee are, that hath sought you long by your shield.' 'Here is my shield,' said sir Palomides, 'wit ye well, and if yee will ought therewith I shall defend it.' 'Sir,' said sir Dinadan, 'heard yee or saw yee not of sir Tristram?' 'So God me helpe, of sir Tristram I both heard and saw; and sir Tristram rescued mee from my death. And yet or hee and I departed, by both our assents wee assigned a day that we should have met at the stony grave that Merlin set by Camelot, and there to have done battaile together; how be it I was letted, for I was prisoner with a lord, and many other moe, and that shall sir Tristram right well understand, that I brake it not for feare or cowardise.' And then sir Palomides told sir Dinadan the day that they should have met together. 'So God me helpe,' said sir Dinadan, 'that same day met sir Launcelot and sir Tristram at the same grave of stone, and there was the most mightiest battaile that ever was seene in this land betweene two knights, for they fought more then foure houres. And so at the last, by both their assents, they were made friends and sworne bretheren for ever, and no man can judge the better knight; and now is sir Tristram made a knight of the round table, and hee sitteth in the siege of the noble knight sir Marhaus.' 'By my head,' said sir Palomides, 'sir Tristram is farre bigger then sir Launcelot, and the hardier knight.' 'Faire knight,' said sir Dinadan, 'as for sir Launcelot and sir Tristram, let them bee, for the worst of them will not be lightly matched of no knight that I know living.' 'No,' said sir Palomides, 'God defend, but and I had a quarrell to the better of them both, I would with as good a will fight with them as with you.' 'Sir,' said sir Dinadan, 'I require you tell mee your name; and in good faith I shall hold you company till that wee come to Camelot, and there ye shall have great worship at the great and noble turnament; for there shall bee queene Guenever and La beale Isoud of Cornewaile.' 'Wit yee well, sir knight,' said sir Palomides, 'for the love of La beale Isoud I will bee there, or

¹ *A broken love day.*—A love day was a day fixed for the settlement of personal differences by arbitration. By a *broken* love day is meant an arrangement or reconciliation which the one party intended not to keep.

else not, but I shall not have to doe¹ in king Arthurs court.' 'Sir,' said sir Dinadan, 'I shall ride with you, and doe you service, so that yee will tell me your name.' 'Sir knight, yee shall understand that my name is sir Palomides, brother unto sir Safre the good knight, and sir Segwarides and I be Sarasins borne both of father and mother.' So then they tooke the broad way toward Camelot, and then were they ware of a castle that was faire and rich, and also passing strong as any was within this realme.

CHAP. C.—*How sir Lamoracke justed with divers knights of the castle wherein was Morgan le Fay.*

'SIR Palomides,' said sir Dinadan, 'here is a castle that I well know, and therein dwelleth queene Morgan le Fay, king Arthurs sister, and king Arthur gave her this castle, the which hee hath repented him sithence a thousand times; and all dangerous knights she withholdeth with her for to destroy all those knights that king Arthur loveth, and there shall no knight passe this way but he must just with one knight, or with two or three. And if it happen that king Arthurs knight be beaten, he shall leese his horse and his harneys and all that hee hath, and hard if hee escape that he shall be prisoner.' 'So God helpe me,' said Sir Palomides, 'this is a shamefull custome and a vilanous usance for a queene to use; and she shall have no service of mee. And if that shee send out any knights for to just, they shall have both their hands full.' 'And I shall not faile you,' said sir Dinadan, 'unto my puissance, upon my life.' So as they sate on horsebacke before the castle, ther came a knight riding with a red shield, and two squires afore him. And then hee came straight unto sir Palomides, and said unto him, 'Faire and gentill knight arraunt, so God me helpe, for the love thou owest unto the true order of knighthood, that thou wilt not have to doe heere with these men of this castle.' (This was sir Lamoracke de Galis that said thus.) 'For I came hitherto to seeke this deed, and therefore let me deale with it, and if I be beaten, revenge mee.' 'In the name of God,' said sir Palomides, 'let see how yee will speede, and wee shall behold your deeds.' Then anon there came foorth a knight of the castle, and he proffered to just with the knight with the red shield; and anon they encountred together, and hee with the red shield smote him so hard that he beare him over unto the earth. Therwith anon came another knight of the castle, and then a third knight; and the knight with the red shield smote them unto the ground. And upon the wals of the castle there were many lords and ladies, which cried and said, 'Well have

¹ *Have to doe*,—i. e. Fight.

yeer justed, yee knight with the red shield.' Right so came out of the castle the fourth knight, and freshly proffered to just with the knight with the red shield. And he was ready, and hee smote him so hard that horse and man fell to the earth, and the knights backe brake with the fall, and his necke also. 'O Jesu,' said sir Palomides, 'that yonder is a passing good knight, and the best juster that ever I saw.' 'By my head,' said sir Dinadan, 'he is as good as sir Launcelot or sir Tristram, whatsoever knight hee bee.'

CHAP. CI.—*How sir Palomides would have justed for sir Lamoracke with the knights of the castle.*

THEN forthwith came out of the castle a knight with a shield bended with blacke and with white. And anon the knight with the red shield and hee encountred together so hard that he smote the knight of the castle through the body, and brake the horse backe. 'Faire knight,' said sir Palomides, 'yee have overmuch in hand, therefore I pray you let mee just, for yee had need to rest you.' 'Why, sir,' said the knight, 'seeme yee that I am weake and feeble? And if ye thinke that I be weary, and that yee have an appetite to just with mee, I shall find you justing enough. Therefore I require you that yee will just with me, and yee shall find that I am not weary.' Then those two noble knights came together as fast as their horses might runne, and the knight smote sir Palomides so sore on the shield that the speare went into his side, and made a great wound and a perillous, and therewith sir Palomides avoided his saddle. And that knight turned unto Dinadan; and sir Dinadan put forth his speare and all to-shevered it upon the knight with the red shield. But the knight smote sir Dinadan againe so hard upon the shield that he beare him cleane over his horse taile. But the knight would not suffer his squires to meddle with their horses, because they were arraunt knights. Then hee dressed him againe to the castle, and justed with seaven knights moe, and there was none of them might withstand him, but he beare them to the earth. And of these twelve knights he slew in plaine justs foure; and the eight knights hee made them to swere on the crosse of a sword, that they should never more use the evill custome of the castle. And when hee had made them to swere that oath, he let them passe. And ever stood the lords and the ladies on the castle wals, crying and saying, 'Knight with the red shield, yee have mervailously well done, as ever wee saw knight doe.' And therewith came a knight out of the castle unarmed, and said, 'Knight with the red shield, overmuch damage hast thou done to us this day; we repent sore that ever thou camest here, for

by thee is fordone¹ the old custome of this castle.' And with that word he returned againe into the castle, and locked the gates. Then the knight with the red shield turned, and called the squires, and so past forth on his way, and rode a great pace. And when hee was past, sir Palomides went unto sir Dinadan and said, 'I had never such a shame of no knight that ever I met, and therefore I cast me to ride after him, and to be revenged with my sword. For on horsebacke I deeme I shall get no worship upon him.' So they rode after the knight with the red shield, and downe in a valey beside a fountaine they were ware where hee alighted to rest him, and had done off his helme for to drinke at the fountaine.

CHAP. CII.—*How sir Lamoracke justed with sir Palomides, and how he hurt him grievously.*

THEN sir Palomides rode fast till hee came nigh him, and then hee said, 'Knight, remember of the shame yee did to mee right now at the castle, therefore dresse thee, for I will have to doe with thee.' 'Well,' said the knight, 'I may happen to endure you.' And therewith he mounted upon his horse, and tooke a great speare in his hand, and made him ready for to just. 'Nay,' said sir Palomides, 'I will not just, for I am sure at justing I get no prize.' And therewith hee alighted downe on foote, and dressed his shield before him, and pulled out his sword. Then the knight with the red shield descended downe from his horse, and dressed his shield before him, and drew out his sword. And then they came together a soft pace, and wonderously they lashed together passing thicke, the mounenance² of an hour or that they breathed. But at the last sir Palomides waxed faint, because of the first wound that he had at the castle with the strooke of a speare; for that wound greeved him wonderous sore. 'Faire knight,' said sir Palomides, 'me seemeth we have assayed either other passing sore, and it may please thee I require thee of thy knighthood for to tell me thy name.' 'Sir,' said the knight unto sir Palomides, 'and thou wilt tell me thy name, I will tell thee mine.' 'Sir,' said he, 'wit thou well my name is sir Palomides.' 'Ah, sir, ye shall understand my name is sir Lamoracke de Galis, son and heire unto king Pellinore, and sir Tor is mine halfe brother.' When sir Palomides heard him say so, he kneeled downe and asked him mercy. Then came sir Dinadan, and made great joy of sir Lamoracke. And thereby in a priory they rested them well and easily all that night.

¹ *Fordone*.—Destroyed; overthrown.

² *Mounenance*.—Amount.

CHAP. CIII.—*How it was told sir Launcelot that sir Dagonet chased king Marke, and how a knight overthrew him and six knights.*

NOW turne we againe, when sir Ewaine and sir Brandiles with his fellowes came unto king Arthurs court, they told sir Launcelot and sir Tristram how sir Dagonet chased king Marke, and how the strong knight hit them downe all seaven with one speare. Then they asked king Marke if hee knew the strong knight. And hee answered and said, 'Hee nameth himselfe the knight that followeth the questing beast, and his name is sir Palomides.' Then were all these seaven knights passing glad that they knew his name.

Now let us turne againe, for on the morrow sir Lamoracke, sir Palomides, and sir Dinadan rode till they saw a faire castle, which stood upon a mountaine well closed. And there they found a knight that hight sir Galahalt, which was lord of that castle. And there they had good cheere, and were well at ease. 'Sir Dinadan,' said sir Lamoracke, 'what will yee doe?' 'Sir,' said sir Dinadan, 'I will to morrow goe toward the court of my lord king Arthur.' 'By my head,' said sir Palomides, 'I will not ride these three dayes, for I am sore hurt and much have I bled, and therefore I will rest me a while.' 'Truely,' said sir Lamoracke, 'and I will abide here with you, and when yee ride then will I ride.' So on the morrow sir Dinadan rode unto the court of king Arthur; and by the way as hee rode he saw where stood an arraunt knight, and made him ready for to just. 'Not so,' said sir Dinadan, 'for I have no will for to just.' 'Well,' said the knight, 'sith ye will not just with me, I pray you tell mee your name.' 'Sir knight,' said he, 'my name is sir Dinadan.' 'Ah,' said the knight, 'full well I know you for a right good knight and a gentle, and wit you well I love you heartily.' 'Then shall heere bee no just betweene us,' said sir Dinadan. So they departed; and that same day hee came to Camelot. And all the court was glad of sir Dinadan, for hee was gentle, wise, and curteous, and a good knight. And in especiall the valiant knight sir Tristram loved sir Dinadan passing well, above all other knights except sir Launcelot. Then the king harkned sir Dinadan how he told that sir Palomides and he were before the castle of Morgan le Fay, and how sir Lamoracke tooke the justs afore them, and how he forjusted twelve knights, and of them he slew foure, 'and after he smote downe sir Palomides and mee both.' 'I may not beleieve that,' quoth king Arthur, 'for sir Palomides is a passing good knight.' 'That is truth,' said sir Dinadan, 'but yet I saw him more better proved hand for hand.' 'So God mee helpe,' said king Arthur, 'I would that that knight sir Lamoracke came unto this court.' 'My lord,' said sir Dinadan, 'he will be here in short space, and sir Palomides also; but I feare me that sir Palomides may not yet travaile.'

CHAP. CIV.—*How king Arthur let doe crie a just, and how sir Lamoracke came in and overthrew sir Gawaine and many more.*

THEN within three dayes after that, king Arthur made a justing at a priory, and there made them ready many knights of the rounde table; for sir Gawaine and his brother made them ready to just; but sir Tristram, sir Launcelot, nor sir Dinadan would not just. Then on the morrow they apparailled them to just, sir Gawaine and his foure brethren, and did there great deeds of armes. And sir Ector de Maris did mervailously well, but sir Gawaine passed all that fellowship. Wherefore king Arthur and all the knights gave sir Gawaine the honour at the beginning. Right so king Arthur was ware of a knight and two squires that came out of a forrest side, with a shield covered with leather; and anon with one speare he smote downe two knights of the round table. Then with his hurtling he lost the covering of the shield. Then was the king and all other ware that he beare the red shield. So within a while he had overthrowen the three brethren of sir Gawaine. With that he encountered with sir Gawaine, and he smote him downe, and then he smote downe twentie knights moe: and so was the prise given to him as a knight peerlesse. 'How now,' said the king, 'well were me and I knew what knight he were with the red shield.' 'I know him well,' said sir Dinadan; 'but as at this time yee shall not know his name.' 'By my head,' said sir Tristram, 'hee justeth better then sir Palomides, and if ye list to knowe his name, wit ye well his name is sir Lamoracke de Galis.' Then slyly and mervailously sir Lamoracke withdrew him from all the fellowship into the forrest. All this espied king Arthur, for his eye went never from him. Then king Arthur, sir Launcelot, sir Tristram, and sir Dinadan tooke their hackneys, and rode streight after the good knight sir Lamoracke de Galis, and there found him. Then said king Arthur, 'A! faire knight, well bee ye found.' And when hee saw the king, hee put off his helme and saluted him. And when he saw sir Tristram, he alighted downe from his horse, and either tooke other in armes, and made great joy of each other. The king was glad, and in likewise was all the fellowship of the round table, except sir Gawaine and his brethren. Then sir Gawaine called prively in counsaile all his bretherne, and unto them said thus: 'Faire bretheren, wit yee well that this sir Lamoracke will never love us, because we slew his father, king Pellinor, for wee deemed that he slew our father king of Orkeney; and, for the despite of king Pellinor, sir Lamoracke did us a shame to our mother, therefore I will bee revenged.'

CHAP. CV.—*How King Arthur made king Marke to bee accorded with sir Tristram, and how they departed to ride toward Cornewaile.*

NOW leaue wee of sir Gawaine and his brethren, and speake wee of King Arthur, that upon a day said to king Marke, 'Sir, I require you and pray you for to give me a gift that I shall aske you.' 'Sir,' said king Marke, 'I will give you what somer yee desire, and it bee in my power.' 'Sir, gramercy,' said king Arthur, 'this will I aske you, that yee will be good lord unto sir Tristram, for hee is a man of great honour, and that yee will take him with you into Cornewaile, and let him see his friends, and there cherish him for my sake.' 'Sir,' said king Marke, 'I promise you by the faith of my bodie, and by the faith I owe unto God and unto you, I shall worship him for your sake in all that I can or maie.' And then he swore upon a booke before him and all his knights. And therewith king Marke and sir Tristram tooke either by the hand hard fastened together; but for all this king Marke thought falsly, as it shall be well proved afterward, for he put sir Tristram in prison, and cowardly would have slaine him. Then soone after king Marke tooke his leave for to ride into Cornewaile, and sir Tristram made him ready for to ride with him; wherefore the most part of the round table were angry and heavy, and in especiall sir Launcelot and sir Lamoracke and Dinadan were wroth out of measure; for well they wist that king Marke would sley or destroye sir Tristram. 'Alas!' said sir Launcelot unto king Arthur, 'what have yee done? for yee shall leese the most man of worship that ever came into your court.' 'It was his owne desire,' said king Arthur, 'and therefore I might not doe withall; for I have done all that I can, and made them to bee accorded.' 'Accorded?' said sir Launcelot, 'fie upon that accord! for yee shall heare that hee shall sley sir Tristram, or els put him in prison; for he is the most coward and the most villainous king and knight that is now living.' And therewith sir Launcelot departed, and came to king Marke, and said to him thus: 'Sir king, and thou mischeve or sley that knight sir Tristram by any manner of falshood or treason, by the faith that I owe unto our Lord Jesu Christ, and unto the high order of knighthood, I shall sley thee with mine owne hands.' 'Sir Launcelot,' said the king, 'overmuch have yee said to me, and I have sworne before king Arthur, in hearing of all his knights, that I should not sley nor betray him; it were to mee overmuch shame to breake my promisse.' So king Marke and sir Tristram rode together, for it was sir Tristrams will; and al was to the entent to see La beale Isoud, for without the sight of her sir Tristram might not endure.

CHAP. CVI.—*How Percivale was made knight of king Arthur, and how a dombe maide speake and brought him to the round table.*

NOW turne wee againe unto Lamoracke, and speake wee of his bretherne. Sir Tor was king Pellenores first sonne, whose mother was the wife of Aries the cowheard, and sir Aglavale, sir Lamoracke, Dornar, and Percivall, all these were sonnes of king Pellenore and of his queene. So when king Marke and sir Tristram were departed from the court, there was made great dole and sorrow for the departing of sir Tristram. And after eight days there came to the court a knight with a young squire with him. And when this knight was unarmed, he went unto the king, and required him for to make that young squire a knight. 'Of what linnage is he come?' said king Arthur. 'Sir,' said the knight, 'hee is the sonne of king Pellinor, and hee is brother unto Lamoracke de Galis, the good knight; and hee is brother to me as well as to sir Lamoracke, and my name is sir Aglavale.' 'Sir Aglavale,' said king Arthur, 'for the love of sir Lamoracke, and for the love of his father, hee shall bee made knight to morrow; now tell me,' said king Arthur, 'what is his name?' 'Sir,' said the knight, 'his name is Percival de Galis'. So on the morrow the king made him knight in Camelot; but the king thought it would be long or he proved a good knight. Then at the dinner the king commanded him to bee set among the meane knights. And so was sir Percival set as the king commanded. Then was there a maide of the queenes court that was come of high blood, and shee was dombe, and had never spoken word. Right so shee came streight into the hall, and went unto Percival and tooke him by the hand, and said aloud, that the king and all the knights might heare it, 'Arise, sir Percival, the noble knight and Goddes knight, and goe with mee.' And so he did. And there shee brought him unto the right side of the siege perillous, and said, 'Faire knight, take here thy siege, for that appertaineth unto thee, and unto none other.' Right so she departed, and asked a priest. And when she was confessed and houseled², then she died. Then the king and all the court made great joy of sir Percival.

¹ *Percival de Galis*.—Percival was a very favourite hero of this cycle of romances. The earlier part of the older story—in which Percival is represented as a youth who had been brought up by his mother in perfect ignorance of everything connected with chivalry, to save him from the fate of his father and two elder brothers, but whose natural disposition gains the mastery over this defective education—has been considerably modified to fit it into our history of king Arthur. The early English metrical romance of sir Percival of Galles is printed in Mr. Halliwell's *Thornton Romances*.

² *Houseled*.—Received the sacrament; communicated.

CHAP. CVII.—*How sir Lamoracke visited king Lots wife, and how sir Gaheris slew her, which was his owne mother.*

NOW turne wee unto sir Lamoracke, which was much prayed there. Then by the meanes of sir Gawaine and his brethren, they sent for their mother there beside fast by a castle beside Camelot, and all was to the entent for to slay sir Lamoracke. The queene of Orkeny was there but a while, but sir Lamoracke wist of her being, and was full faine; and hee sent to her and appointed a time to visit her. Thereof was ware sir Gaheris, and hee rode before the same night, and waited upon sir Lamorake, and then hee saw sir Lamoracke alight. And then hee went into a parlour and unarmed him; and then he went unto the queenes presence, and she made of him passing great joy, and he of her againe, for either loved other passing sore. So when the knight sir Gaheris saw his time, he came into the room all armed, with his sword naked, and sodainely he gate his mother by the haire, and strooke off her head.

When sir Lamorake saw the hot blood dash upon him, hee was sore abashed and dismaied of that dolorous knight. And therewith sir Lamoracke lept up as a man all dismaied, saying thus: 'Ah, sir Gaheris, full foule and evill have yee done; alas! why have yee slaine your owne mother? with more right yee should have slaine mee.' 'Leave these words,' said sir Gaheris, 'for and thou speake felonously I will slay thee; but because thou art not armed, I am ashamed to sley thee, but wit thou well in what place that I may get thee, I shall slay thee.' Sir Lamoracke saw that there was none other bote¹, fast armed him, and tooke his horse and rode his way, making great sorrow; but for shame and doloure he would not ride unto king Arthurs court, but rode another way. But when it was knowne that sir Gaheris had slaine his mother, king Arthur was passing wroth, and commanded him to goe out of his court. Wit yee well sir Gawaine was wroth that sir Gaheris had slaine his mother and let sir Lamoracke escape. 'Sir,' said sir Launcelot, 'here is a great mischiefe befallen by felony and by forcast treason, that your sister is thus shamefully slaine; and I am sure yee shall leese that good knight sir Lamoracke, for sir Gawaine and his brethren have concluded and sworne to slay him, and ever they may see their time.' 'That shall I let;' said king Arthur.

CHAP. CVIII.—*How sir Agravaine and sir Mordred met with a knight flying, and how they both were overthrowne, and sir Dinadan.*

NOW leave wee of sir Lamoracke, and speake we of sir Gawaines brethren, and speciall of sir Agravaine and sir Mordred. As they rode on their adventures, they met with

¹ *Bols.*—Remedy.

² *Let.*—Prevent; hinder.

a flying knight, sore wounded, and they asked him what tidings. 'Faure knights,' said hee, 'here commeth a knight after me that will slay mee.' With that came sir Dinadan, riding to them by adventure, but hee would promise him no helpe, but sir Agravaine and sir Mordred promised him to rescue him. Therewith came that knight streight unto them, and anon he proffered for to just. That saw sir Mordred, and rode to him, but hee strooke first sir Mordred and then sir Agravaine over their horses tailes, and said to them, 'Sirs, wit you well both that I am sir Breuse saunce Pitie that hath done this to you.' When sir Dinadan saw this, hee must needs just with him for shame. And so sir Dinadan and hee encountred together, and sir Dinadan smote him over his horse taile. Then he tooke his horse and fled. Then rode sir Dinadan unto sir Mordred and unto sir Agravaine. 'Sir, knight,' said they, 'well have yee done, and well have yee revenged us, wherefore wee pray you tell us your name.' 'Faure knights,' said he, 'yee shall know that my name is sir Dinadan.' Then spake the hurt knight which sir Breuse saunce Pitie had chased, whose name was sir Dalan, and he said, 'If thou be sir Dinadan, thou slewest my father.' 'It may well bee so,' said sir Dinadan, 'but then it was in my defence, and at his owne request.' 'By mee head,' said sir Dalan, 'thou shalt die therefore.' And therewithall he dressed his speare and his shield. And sir Dinadan smote him downe from his horse that his necke was nigh broken; and in the same wise hee smote sir Mordred and sir Agravaine. And after, in the quest of the Sancgreall, cowardly and felonously they slew sir Dinadan. And so sir Dinadan rode to a castle that hight Beale-valet, and there he found sir Palomides, that was not yet whole of the wound that sir Lamoracke gave him.

CHAP. CIX.—*How king Arthur, with the queene and sir Launcelot, received letters out of Cornewaile, and of the answers againe thether.*

NOW leave wee of sir Palomides and sir Dinadan in the castle of Beale-valet, and turne wee againe unto king Arthur. There came a knight of Cornewaile, whose name was Fergus, and hee told king Arthur and sir Launcelot good tidings of sir Tristram, and there were brought goodly letters, and how he left him in the castle of Tintagill. Then came a damosell that brought goodly letters unto king Arthur and unto sir Launcelot. Then they wrote goodly letters againe. But sir Launcelot bad ever sir Tristram beware of king Marke. So the damosell departed, and brought letters to king Marke. And when hee had read them and understood them, hee was wroth with sir Tristram de Lyones, for hee deemed that he had sent the damosell unto king Arthur, for king Arthur and sir Launcelot in a manner threatned king Marke. And as king

Marke read these letters, he deemed treason by sir Tristram. Then prively and secretly hee sent letters unto king Arthur, and unto the queene Guenever, and unto sir Launcelot. So the varlet departed, and found the king and queene in Wales at Carlion. And then as the king and the queene were at masse, the varlet came with the letters. And then when masse was done, the king and the queene opened the letter prively by themselves; and the beginning of the kings letter spake wondrous short unto King Arthur, and bad him entermeete¹ with himselfe and with his wife and his knights, for hee was able enough to rule and keepe his wife.

CHAP. CX.—*How sir Launcelot was wroth with the letter that hee received from king Marke, and sir Dinadan that made a laie of king Marke.*

AND when king Arthur understood the letter, hee mused upon many things, and thought upon his sisters words queene Morgan le Fay that shee had said betweene queene Guenever and sir Launcelot du Lake; and in his mind hee studied a great while, and then hee bethought him againe how his sister was his most enemy, and that shee hated the queene and sir Launcelot, and so hee put all that out of his thought. And then king Arthur read the letter againe, and the letter clause² said, that king Marke tooke sir Tristram for his mortell enemy, wherefore. hee put king Arthur out of doubt hee would bee revenged on sir Tristram. Then was king Arthur wroth with king Marke. And when queene Guenever had read her letter, and understood it, shee was wroth out of measure, for the letter spake shame by her and by sir Launcelot. And so prively shee sent the letter to sir Launcelot, and when hee wist the entent of the letter, he was so wroth that he laid him downe upon his bed to sleepe. And so sir Launcelot awaked, and went to a window and read the letter againe, which made him angry. 'Sir,' said sir Dinadan, 'wherefore bee yee angry? discover your heart to mee; for though I bee not of worship my selfe, yet I love all those that bee of worship.' 'It is truth,' said sir Launcelot, 'ye be a trusty knight, and for great trust I will shew you my counsaile.' And when sir Dinadan understood all, he said, 'Sir, this is my counsaile. I will make a lay for king Marke, and when it is made, I shall make an harper to sing it before him.' So anon hee went and made it, and taught it an harper that hight Elyot, and when hee could³ it, hee taught it to many harpers. And so by the will of sir Launcelot and of king Arthur, the harpers went straight unto Wales and Corne-

¹ *Entermeete*.—Intermeddle.

² *Letter clause*.—Closed letter.

³ *Could*.—Knew; i.e. when he had committed it to memory.

waile, to sing the lay that sir Dinadan made by king Marke, which was the worst¹ lay that ever harper sung with harpe or with any other instrument.

CHAP. CXI.—*How sir Tristram was hurt, and of a warre made to king Marke; and of sir Tristram, how he promised to rescue him.*

NOW turne we againe unto sir Tristram and king Marke. As sir Tristram was at the justes and turnement, it fortuneth that he was sore wounded. And for to rest him, hee went to a good knight that dwelled in Cornewaile in a castle, whose name was sir Dinas the seneshall. Then by misfortune there came one of Sessoyne² with an hedious³ hoost, and they entred nigh unto the castle of Tintagill; and their captaines name was sir Elias, a good man of armes. When king Marke understood that his enemies were entred into his land, hee made great sorrow; and when his counsaile was come, they devised and caste many perilles of the strength of their enemies, and they concluded all at once⁴, and said unto king Marke thus: 'Sir, wit yee well that yee must send for sir Tristram the good knight; for by sir Tristram they must be fought withall, or else wee row against the streame.' 'Well then,' said king Marke, 'I will doe by your counsaile.' When sir Tristram understood, that the king had sent for him, he mounted upon a soft hackney⁵ and rode to king Mark. When he was come, the king said thus, 'Faure nephew sir Tristram, this is all; heere be come our enemies of Sessoine, that are heere nigh hand, and without any tarrying they must be met with shortly, or else they will destroy this countrey.' 'Sir,' said sir Tristram, 'wit yee well that all my power is at your commandement, and wit yee well, sir, these eight dayes may I beare none armes, and by that day I shall doe what I may.' 'Yee say well,' said king Marke, 'then goe you againe, and rest you and make you fressh, and I shall goe and meete the Sessoins with all my power.' So king Marke departed for to goe to Tintagill, and sir Tristram went to rest him. And the king made a great hoost, and departed them in three. The first part led sir Dinas the seneshall, and sir Andret led the second part, and sir Argus led the third part, and hee was of king Markes blood. And so king Marke issued out of the castle of Tintagill upon his enemies. And the good knight sir Dinas rode out before, and slew two knights with his owne hands. And then began the battaile, and ever was sir Dinas the seneshall the best of all king

¹ Worst.—i.e. the most ill-natured or satirical.

² Sessoyne.—An invasion of the Saxons is intended.

³ Hedious.—Hideous.

⁴ At once.—i.e. in one opinion; unanimously. It is here a corruption of the older phrase *at ones*.

⁵ Hackney.—A soft ambuler, Caxton.

Markes part. But at the last king Marke and sir Dinas withdrew them to the castle of Tintagil, with great slaughter of people; and the Sessoinnes followed them fast that ten of them were put within the gates and foure slaine with the portcoileis. By then sir Tristram was hole; and hee had gotten him ten good knights of king Arthurs, and with them hee rode to the castle of Tintagill, and, when he saw the great hoost of Sessoinnes, hee mervailed greatly. And then sir Tristram rode by the woods and by the ditches as secretly as hee might, till he came nigh the gates. And there dressed a knight unto him, when hee saw that sir Tristram would enter; and sir Tristram smote him downe dead, and so he served three moe. And every each of those ten knights slew a man of armes. So sir Tristram cntred into the castle of Tintagill.

CHAP. CXII.—*How sir Tristram overcame the battaile, and how sir Elias desired a man to fight body for body.*

SO on the morrow Elias the captaine came and bad king Marke come out and doe battaile. Then said sir Tristram unto the messenger thus: 'Beare thy lord word from the king and me, that we will doe battaile with him to morrow in the plaine field.' 'What is your name?' said the messenger. 'Wit thou well my name is sir Tristram de Lioness.' Therewith the messenger departed, and told his lord sir Elias all that he had heard. Then sir Tristram let devise the battailes in what manner it should bee. He let depart¹ his host in sixe parts, and ordeyned sir Dinas the seneshall to have the foreward, and other knights to rule the remnant. And the same night sir Tristram brent all the Sessoinnes ships unto the cold water. Then they ordeyned their battailes in foure parts, wonderous well apparailed and garnished with men of armes. Thus they within issued, and they without set freely upon them, and there sir Dinas did great deeds of armes. Not for then² sir Dinas and his fellowship were put to the worst. With that came sir Tristram, and slew on the right hand and on the left hand, that men mervailed that ever he might doe such deeds of armes. Therewith sir Tristram met sir Elias the captaine, and smote him so sore upon the helme that he avoided his saddle. And they fought till it was night, and for great slaughter, and for wounded people, every partie drew to their rest. And when king Marke was come within the castle of Tintagill, hee lacked of his knights an hundred; and they of without two hundred. Then sir Elias the captaine sent word unto king Marke in great despite and anger, whether he

¹ *Depart.*—Divide.

² *Not for them.*—i. e. nevertheless.

would find a knight that would fight for him body for body, and if that he might sley king Marks knight, he to have the truage of Cornewaile yearly; 'and if that his knight sley mine, I fully release my claime for ever hereafter.' When king Marke understood the messenger, he bad him abide, and he should have his answere. Then called he al his baronage together to wit what was best to doe. They said all at once, 'To fight in a field wee have no lust, for had not beene sir Tristrams prowesse, it had beene likely that we never should have escaped; and therfore, sir, as we deeme, it were well done to find a knight that would do battaile with him, for he knightly profereth.'

CHAP. CXIII.—*How sir Elias and sir Tristram fought together for the truage of Cornewaile, and how sir Tristram slew sir Elias in the field.*

NOTWITHSTANDING¹ all this said, no knight could be found that would fight with him. 'Sir king,' said they all, 'heere is no knight that dare fight with sir Elias.' Therewith one went to sir Tristram and told him, where hee lay; and therewith sir Tristram arose lightly, and put upon him a long gowne, and came before king Marke and all the lords. 'Sir,' said sir Tristram, 'now I understand yee would have my succour to fight with sir Elias; therefore lightly call to mee his messenger hee shall have his answere, that I will doe battaile with him to morrow.' Then the messenger that was departed² was brought before king Marke; and when sir Tristram had given him his message to sir Elias hee departed and came unto his lord, and told how hee was answered of sir Tristram. And then were both the hoosts assembled on both parties of the field without the castle of Tintagill. And there was none armed but sir Tristram and sir Elias. So when the appointment was made, they departed that one from that other, and they came together with all the might that their horses might runne, and either knight smote other so hard, that both horses and knights went unto the earth. Not for then they both lightly arose up, and dressed their shields on their shoulders, with naked swords in their hands, and they dashed together like as there had beene a flaming fire about them. And by then they had foughten the mounenance of an houre, sir Tristram waxed faint and forbled³, and gave sore abacke, that all men said he was overcome; for sir Elias had given him twenty strooks against one. Then sir Tristram remembred

¹ *Notwithstanding*.—Caxton has the equivalent *not for thanne*. See the note on the previous page.

² *Then the messenger that was departed*.—*Thenne was the messenger departed brought before kynge Marke*, Caxton.

³ *Forbled*.—Weak from bleeding. The edition of 1634 has printed, erroneously, *for blood*.

him of his lady La beale Isoud that looked upon him, and how he was likely never to come in her presence. Then hee dressed up his shield unto sir Elias, and gave him many sad strookes, twentie against on, and all to-brake his shield and his hawberke, that the hote blood ranne downe to the earth. Therewithall sir Elias fell to the earth and died. Then they of sir Elias part departed; and king Marke tooke of them many prisoners and the remnant he sent into their country to borrow out¹ their fellowes.

CHAP. CXIV.—*How at a great feast king Marke made, an harper came and sung the lay that Dinadan had made.*

NOW let us overpasse this matter, and speake wee of the harper that sir Launcelot and sir Dinadan had sent into Cornewaile with the lay, and the great feast that king Marke made, because the Sessoines were so put out of his country. Then came Eliot the harper with the lay that sir Dinadan had made, and secretly brought it unto sir Tristram de Liones, and told him of the lay that sir Dinadan had made by king Marke. 'Sir,' said Eliot, 'dare I sing this song before king Marke?' 'Yee, upon my perill,' said sir Tristram, 'for I shall be thy warrant.' Then as king Marke was at meate, Eliot the harper came in. And because hee was a curious harper, men heard him sing the same lay that sir Dinadan had made, the which spake the most vilanie by king Marke of his treason that ever man heard. When the harper had sung his song to the end, king Marke was wonderous wroth with him, and said, 'Thou harper, how durst thou be so bold on thy head to sing this song before me?' 'Sir,' said Eliot, 'wit you well I am a minstrell, and I must doe as I am commanded of these lords that I beare the armes of; and, sir king, wit you well that sir Dinadan, a knight of the round table, made this song, and he made me to sing it before you.' 'Thou saiest well,' said king Marke, 'I charge thee that thou hie thee fast out of my sight.' So the harper departed, and went unto sir Tristram, and told him how he had sped; and then sir Tristram let make letters goodly as hee could devise unto sir Launcelot and unto sir Dinadan, and so he let conduct Eliot the harper out of the country.

CHAP. CXV.—*How king Marke slew by treason his brother Boudwine for good service that he had done to him.*

NOW turne wee to another matter, which befell betweene king Marke and his brother, that was called the good prince sir Boudwine, which all the people of the country loved

¹ *To borrow out.—i. e. to*

passing wel. So it befel upon a time that the miscreants¹ Sarasins landed in the country of Cornwaile soone after that the Sessoinnes were gone; and then the good prince sir Boudwine, at the landing of them, he raised the countrey prively and hastily, and or it was day hee let put wild fire in three of his owne ships, and suddainely hee pulled up the sailes, and with the wind hee made those ships to bee driven among the navy of the Sarasins. And to make short the tale, those ships set on fire all the other ships that none were saved. And at the point of the day the good prince sir Boudwine, with all his fellowship, set upon the miscreants with shouts and cries, and slew to the number of fortie thousand, and left none alive. And when king Marke wist this, hee was wonderous wroth that his brother should winne such worship; and hee sent for the noble prince sir Boudwine and Anglides his wife, and commanded them to bring their yong sonne with them, that hee might see him. And all this he did to the intent to slay the child as well as the father, for hee was the falsest traytour that ever was borne. So when he came with his wife Anglides, the king made them faire semblance till they had dined; and when they had dined, king Marke sent for his brother, and said to him, 'Brother, how speed you when the miscreants arrived by you? mee seemeth that I might have had the honour, and not you.' 'Sir,' said the prince sir Boudwine, 'it was so that if I had taried till I had sent for you, the miscreants had destroyed my countrey.' 'Thou liest, false traytour,' said king Marke, 'and thou cherishest that I hate.' And therewith he strooke him to the heart with a dagger, and he never after spake word. Then the lady Anglides his wife made great dole and swoned, for she saw her lord slaine afor her face. Then was there no more to do but that prince Boudwine was despoiled² and brought to buriels, but Anglides prively gat her husbands dobet and his shirt, and that shee kept secretly. So La beale Isoud sent to Anglides, prince Boudwins wife, and bad her avoide lightly, or else her young son, Alisaunder Lorfelin, should be slaine. When shee heard this, shee tooke her horse and her young child Alisaunder, and rode her way with such poore men as durst ride with her.

CHAP. CXVI.—*How Anglides, Boudwins wife, escaped with her young sonne, Alesaunder Lorfelin, and came to the castle of Aroundell.*

NOTWITHSTANDING, when king Marke had done this deede, yet he bethought him to doe more vengeance, and with his sword in his hand hee sought from chamber to chamber to find Anglides and her young sonne. And when shee was

¹ *Miscreants.*—Here, and in other instances in the same page, the edit. of 1634 has *marchants*.

² *Despoiled.*—Stripped of his clothing.

mist, he called a good knight that hight sir Sadocke, and charged him, upon paine of death, to fetch Anglides againe and her young sonne. So sir Sadocke departed, and rode after Anglides, and within ten mile he overtooke her, and bad her turne againe and ride with him unto king Marke. 'Madame,' said sir Sadocke, 'of your losse is dole and pitie; but, madame,' said sir Sadocke, 'would you depart out of this countrey with your son Alisaunder, and keepe him till hee bee of age, that hee may revenge his fathers death, then would I suffer you to depart from mee, so ye promise me for to revenge the death of prince Boudwin.' 'A! gentle knight, Jesu thanke thee, and if my sonne Alisaunder live to be a good knight, he shall have his fathers doublet and his shirt with the bloody markes; and I shall give him such a charge that hee shall remember it while he liveth.' And when sir Sadocke came to king Marke, hee told him that he had drowned young Alisaunder; and thereof king Marke was full glad. Now turne we unto Anglides, which rode both night and day by adventure out of Cornewaile, till by fortune shee came to a castle that was called Magounce¹, and now it is called Arundell, in Southsex. And the constables name was Bellander², and the counstable told dame Anglides that the same castle was hers by right enheritance. Then dame Anglides endured yeares and winters till that her sonne Alisaunder was big and strong.

CHAP. CXVII.—*How Anglides gave the bloody doublet unto Alisaunder her sonne the same day that hee was made knight, and the charge withall.*

THEN upon a day sir Bellander the constable came unto dame Anglides and said, 'Madame, it were time that my lord Alisaunder were made a knight, for he is a passing strong young man.' 'Sir,' said Anglides, 'I would hee were made knight; but then I must give him the most charge that ever sinfull mother gave to her child.' 'Doo as yee list,' said sir Bellander, 'and I shall give him warning that hee shall bee made knight; now it will be well done that hee may bee made knight at our Lady-day in Lent.' Then the constable, sir Bellander, ordeined twentie of the greatest gentlemens sonnes and the best borne men of the countrey, that should all be made knights that same day that Alisaunder was made knight. So on the same day that Alisaunder and his twentie fellowes were made knights, at the offering of the masse, there came dame Anglides unto her sonne, and shee pulled out a bloody doublet

¹ *Magounce*.—*Magouns*, Caxton. I cannot guess upon what grounds the compiler of this romance imagined this to be the ancient name of Arundel. The site of Arundel may have been occupied by the Romans, but no place named Maguntium is known to have existed in this island.

² *Bellander*.—*Belangere*, Caxton.

and a bloody shirt, that were bebled with old blood. And there shee told him why and wherefore, and how that 'for his goodnesse king Marke slew my lord with his dagger before my face in my presence, and therefore this shall bee your charge, the which I shall give to you now.'

CHAP. CXVIII.—*How it was told king Marke of sir Alisaunder, and how hee would have slaine sir Sadocke for saving of his life.*

'NOW I require thee and charge thee upon my blessing, and upon the high order of knighthood, that thou be revenged on king Marke for the death of thy father.' And therewith she swoned. Then sir Alisaunder tooke his mother up in his armes, and said, 'Fairst mother, yee have given mee a great charge, and heere I promise you that I shall bee avenged upon king Marke when I may, and that I promise unto God and unto you.' So this feast was ended. Then sir Alisaunder justed with his twentie fellows that were made knights with him; but he overthrew all those twentie knights, so that none of them might withstand him a buffet. Then one of those knights departed for to goe to king Marke, and told him all how sir Alisaunder was made knight, and all the charge that his mother gave him. And therewithall king Marke sought sir Sadocke from chamber to chamber to slay him. When sir Sadocke saw king Marke come with his sword drawne in his hand, hee said thus: 'Beware, king Marke, thou come not neere me, for wit thou well that I saved Alisaunder his life, of which I will never repent mee: and now beware, king Marke, of young sir Alisaunder, for hee is made a knight.' 'Alas,' said king Marke, 'that ever I should here a traitour say so before me.' And therewith foure of king Markes knights drew their swords to slay sir Sadocke; but anon sir Sadocke slew them all in king Markes presence. And so sir Sadocke passed forth into his chamber, and rode his way a good pace. When sir Tristram understood that sir Alisaunder was made knight, anon forthwith he sent him a letter, praying him and charging him that hee would draw him unto the court of the noble king Arthur, and that he would put him in the governance of sir Launcelot. And so this letter was sent to sir Alisaunder from his cosin sir Tristram; and at that time hee thought to doe after his commandement and counsaile. Then king Marke called the knight which had brought him the tidings from sir Alisaunder, and commanded him for to abide still in that countrey. But within short space sir Sadocke met with that false knight and slew him. Then king Marke sent unto queene Morgan le Fay, and unto the queene of Northgalis, praying that they two sorceresses would set all the countrey in a fire, with ladies that were en-

chanteresses, and by such as were dangerous knights, as Malgrin, and Breuse saunce Pity, that by no meanes sir Alisaunder Lorfelin should escape them; but that either he should be taken or slaine.

CHAP. CXIX.—*How sir Alisaunder wanne the prise at a turnament, and of Morgan le Fay, and how hee fought with sir Malgrin, and slew him.*

NOW turne wee againe unto sir Alisaunder, that at his departing his mother tooke him his fathers bloody shirt, and that always hee beare with him till his dying day. in token for to thinke upon his fathers death. So sir Alisaunder was purposed for to ride to London (by the counsaile of sir Tristram) unto sir Launcelot. And by fortune hee went by the sea side, and rode wrong. And there hee wanne at a turnement the degree, which turnament king Carados made; and there hee smote downe king Carados and twentie of his knights, and also sir Safere. And ever as he smote downe knights, he made them for to sweare to weare no harneis in a twelve months and a day.

So turne we unto the damosell of the castle, that sent for sir Alisaunder, and said, 'Sir knight, wilt thou for my sake just with a knight of this countrey, the which is an evill neighbour unto me, and his name is called sir Malgrin; and he will not suffer me to be married in no manner of wise for all that I can doe, or any knight for my sake.' 'Damosell,' said sir Alisaunder, 'and hee come while I am here, I will fight with him, and my poore body I will jeopard for your sake.' Then forthwith she sent for him, for he was at her command. And when either had a sight of other, they made them ready for to just, and they came together full egerly, and Malgrin bruised¹ his speare upon sir Alisaunder, and sir Alisaunder smote him to the earth. But this sir Malgrin arose lightly, saying, 'Though thou have the better on mee on horsebacke, yet shalt thou finde that I shall endure like a knight on foote.' And then they rashed together and smote upon their helmes and shields by the space of three houres, that never man could say which was the better knight. And in the meane while came queene Morgan le Fay to the damosell of the castle, and they beheld the battaile. 'Now, knight,' said sir Malgrin, 'hold thy hand a while, and tell mee what thou art?' 'I will not,' said sir Alisaunder, 'but if me list; but tell mee thy name, and why thou keepest this countrey, or else thou shalt die of my hands.' 'Wit thou well,' said Malgrin, 'that for the maidens love of this castle I have slaine ten knights by mishap, and by outrage and pride of my selfe I have slaine ten other knights.' 'So

¹ Bruised.—Broke.

God me helpe,' said sir Alisaunder, 'this is the foulest confession that ever I heard knight make ; therefore keepe thee as well as thou maiest, for either thou shalt slay me or else I shall slay thee.' Then againe they lashed together fiercely, and at the laste sir Alisaunder smote sir Malgrin to the earth, and then he rashed off his helme and lightly smote off his head. And then weening to be strong enough he would have mounted, but he fell downe flat to the earth for feeblenesse. The damosell of the castle seeing that, laid sir Alisaunder in a horse litter, and led him to the castle, for hee had neither force nor might to stand upon the ground ; for he had sixteene great wounds, and in especiall one of them was like to be his death.

CHAP. CXX.—*How queene Morgan le Fay had sir Alisaunder in her castle, and how shee healed his wounds.*

THEN queene Morgan le Fay searched his wounds, and gave him such an oyntment that he should have died. So the damosell of the castle came and desired of him marriage. 'Damosell,' said sir Alisaunder, 'I thanke you, but as yet I cast me not to marriage in this countrey.' 'Sir,' said she, 'sithen yee will not marry mee, I pray you, in so much as yee have wonne me, that ye will give me unto a knight of this countrey that hath beene long my friend, and he hath loved me many yeares.' 'With all my heart,' said sir Alisaunder. 'I will assent therto.' Then came queene Morgan le Fay to Alisaunder, and bad him arise, and put him in a horse litter, and gave him such a drinke that in three daies and three nights he wakned not but slept. And so shee brought him unto her owne castle, which at that time was called La beale Regard. Then queene Morgan le Fay came to sir Alisaunder and asked him if he would faine be hole. 'Who would be sicke,' said sir Alisaunder, 'and he might bee hole?' 'Well,' said queene Morgan le Fay, 'then shall yee promise me by your knight-hood, that this day twelve moneths and a day ye shall not passe the compasse of this castle, and without doubt yee shall lightly be whole.' 'I assent,' said sir Alisaunder ; and there hee made her a promise. Then was hee soone whole. And when sir Alisaunder was whole, then hee repented him of his oath, because hee might not bee revenged of king Marke. Right so there came a damosell that was cosin unto the earle of Pase, and she was cosin to queene Morgan le Fay, and by right that castle of La beale Regard should have beene hers by true inheritance. So this damosell entred into this castle where sir Alisaunder lay, and there shee found him upon his bed passing heavy and all sad.

CHAP. CXXI.—*How sir Alisaunder was delivered from queene Morgan le Fay by the meanes of a damosell.*

‘SIR knight,’ said the damosell, ‘if yee would be merry, I could tell you good tidings.’ ‘Well were me,’ said sir Alisaunder, ‘and I might heare of good tidings, for I stand as a prisoner by my promise.’ ‘Faïre knight,’ said shee, ‘this castle of right ought for to be mine, and I have an unkle that is a mightie earle, for hee is earle of Pase, and of all folkes he hateth most Morgan le Fay, and I shall send unto him, and pray him that for my sake hee will destroy this castle for the evill customes that bee used therin, and then will hee come and set wilde fire¹ on every part of the castle, and I shall get you out at a prevy posterne, and there yee shall have your horse and your harneys. Ye may keepe the roome of this castle these twelve moneths and a day, then breake yee not your oath.’ ‘Truely, faïre damosell,’ said sir Alisaunder, ‘ye say soth.’ And then he kissed her. So anon shee sent to her unkle, and bad him come and destroy that castle. When the day came that was set, thither came the earle of Pase with foure hundred knights, and set on fire all the parties of the castle, that or they ceased they left not a stone standing. And all this while that the fire was in the castle, sir Alisaunder abode still in the garden; and when the fire was done, hee let make a crie that he would keepe that peece of earth twelve moneths and a day from all manner of knights that would come. So it hapned that ther was a duke that hight Anserous, and he was of the kinne of sir Launcelot, and was a great pilgrim, for every thirde yeare he would be at Jerusalem. And this duke had a daughter that hight Alis, which was a passing faïre woman, and because of her father she was called Alis la beale Pilgrim. And anon as shee hard of this crie, she went to king Arthurs court, and there said openly in hearing of many knights, that ‘what knight that may overcome the knight that keepeth the peece of earth, shall have me and all my lands.’ When the knights of the round table heard her say thus, many were glad, for she was passing faïre, and of great lands. Then she ordeined her pavilion streight by the peece of earth that sir Alisaunder kept. So she was not so soone there but there came a knight of king Arthurs court, that hight Sagamore le Desirous, and hee profered to just with sir Alisaunder, and they encountred, and sir Sagamore le Desirous bruised his speare upon sir Alisaunder, but sir Alisaunder smote him so hard that he avoïded his sadle. And when La beale Alis saw him just so

¹ *Wilde fire*.—What was called more technically Greek fire, a combustible substance which could not be easily extinguished. Cotgrave has ‘*Feu Gregeois*—Wild-fire, or the best kind thereof; such as will burne within the water,’ &c.

well, shee lepte out of her pavilion, and tooke sir Alisaunder by the bridle, and said, 'Faire knight, I require thee of thy knight-hood, shew me thy visage.' 'I dare right well shew my visage,' said sir Alisaunder, and then hee put of his helme. And when she saw his visage, then she said, 'Oh, sweete Jesu! thee I must love, and non other.' 'Then shew mee your visage,' said hee.

CHAP. CXXII.—*How sir Alisaunder met with Alis la beale Pilgrim, and how hee justed with two knights, and after of him and of sir Mordred.*

THEN shee unwimpled her visage, and when sir Alisaunder saw her, hee said, 'Here have I found my love and my lady. Truly, faire lady,' said hee, 'I promise you to bee your knight, and none other that beareth life.' 'Now, gentle knight,' said she, 'tell mee your name.' 'Faire lady,' said hee, 'my name is sir Alisaunder Lorfelin. Now, faire damosell,' said hee, 'tell mee your name.' 'My name is,' said she, 'Alis la beale Pilgrim.' And as they thus talked together, there came a knight that hight sir Harsouse le Berbuse and another that hight sir Hewgon; and there sir Alisaunder smote them both from their horses, and would have slaine them had they not yeelded them. So then sir Alisaunder made both those knights to sweare to weare none armour in a twelve moneths and a day. Then the damosell that had holpen sir Alisaunder out of the castle told dame Alis how he was a prisoner of the castle of La beale Regard, and there shee told how she gate him out of prison. Then La beale Alis told him of what blood shee was come. 'Sir, wit ye well,' said shee, 'that I am of the blood of king Ban, that was father unto that noble knight sir Launcelot.' 'Truely, faire lady,' said sir Alisaunder, 'my mother told mee that my father was brother to a king, and I am nigh cosin to sir Tristram.' This while came there three knights, that one hight Vains, and that other hight Harvis de les Marches, and the third hight Perin de la Mountaine. And with one speare sir Alisaunder smote them downe all three, and made them to sweare to were no armour in twelve moneths. So, when they were departed, sir Alisaunder beheld his lady Alis on horsebacke as shee stood in her pavilion, and then he was so enamoured upon her that hee wist not whether he was on horsebacke or on foote. Right so came the false knight sir Mordred, and saw that sir Alisaunder was assotted on his lady; and therewithall tooke his horse by the bridle and led him here and there, and had thought to have led him out of that place to have shamed him. When the damosell that had holpen him out of the castle saw how shamefully he was led, anon shee let arme her, and set a shield on her shoulder, and forthwith she mounted upon his horse, and gate a naked sword in her hand, and she thrust unto

sir Alisaunder with all her might, and shee gave him such a buffet that he thought the fire flew out of his eyes. And when sir Alisaunder felt that strooke, hee looked about him, and drew out his sword; and when hee understood how the false knight would have shamed him, had not the damosell beene, then was hee passing wroth with himselfe that sir Mordred had so escaped his hands. Then sir Alisaunder justed thus day by day; and every day within those twelve moneths he had to doe with one knight or other, and there was never knight that put him to the worse. And at the twelve months end he departed with his lady Alis la beale Pilgrim. And the damosell would never goe from him. And so they went into their countrey of Benoy, and lived there in great joy.

CHAP. CXXIII.—*How sir Galahalt the haut prince did doe cry a justs in Surluse, and queene Guenevers knights should just against all them that would come.*

BUT king Marke would not stint till that he had slaine him by treason. And his sonne which hight Bellengerus le Beuse came to the court of king Arthur, and proved a passing good knight; and he revenged his fathers death. For the false king Marke slew both sir Tristram and sir Alisaunder Lorfelin falsly and feloniously. And it happined so that sir Alisaunder had never grace nor fortune for to come unto king Arthurs court.

So let wee of him passe, and turne wee unto another tale. So it befell that sir Galahalt the haute prince was lord of the countrey of Surluse, wherefore came many good knights. And this noble prince came unto king Arthurs court, and told him all his intent, how hee would let doe crie a justs that should last eight dayes in the countrey of Surluse, and there hee asked leave for to let cry a justs. 'I will well give you leave,' said king Arthur; 'but wit you well that I may not bee there.' 'Sir,' said queene Guenever, 'pleaseth it you of your goodnesse to give me licence for to bee at that justs?' 'With a right good will,' said king Arthur, 'so that sir Galahalt the haute prince take you unto his governance.' So anon the queene commanded sir Launcelot for to make him ready with such knights as he thought best. And at the first day of justing there came in sir Dinadan disguised, and did many great deeds of armes.

CHAP. CXXIV.—*How that sir Launcelot fought in the turnament, and how sir Palomides did there deeds of armes for a damosell.*

THEN, at the request of queene Guenever and king Bagdemagus, sir Launcelot came into the range, but hee was all disguised. And there met hee with sir Ector de Maris his owne brother and then sir Launcelot smote downe sir Ector de Maris.

That saw sir Bleoberis, and hee smote sir Launcelot such a buffet upon the helme, that hee wist not well where hee was. Then sir Launcelot was wroth, and smote sir Bleoberis so sore upon the helme that hee avoided his saddle. And so he rode by and thrust forth to the thickest. So both king Bagdemagus and the king of Northgalis parties hurled together. And then began a strong meddle¹, but they of Northgalis were farre bigger². When sir Launcelot saw his part goe to the worst, hee throng into the thickest presse with a sword in his hand, and there hee pulled downe knights, and raised off their helmes, that all men had wonder that ever one knight should doe such deeds of armes. And when sir Meliagaunt, that was sonne unto king Bagdemagus, saw how sir Launcelot fared, he mervailed greatly; and when he understood that it was hee, hee wist well that hee was disguised for his sake. Then this sir Meliagaunt prayed a knight to slay sir Launcelots horse, either with a sword or with a speare. At that same time king Bagdemagus his father met with a knight that hight Sauseise, a good knight, unto whom he said, 'Now, faire Sauseise, encounter with my sonne sir Meliagaunt, for I would that he were well beaten of thy hands that hee might depart out of the field.' And so then sir Sauseise encountred with sir Meliagaunt, and either smote other downe; and then they fought on foote together, and there sir Sauseise had wonne sir Meliagaunt, had not rescues come there. So then sir Galahalt the haute prince blew to lodging, and every knight unarmed him and went to the great feast. Then in the meane while there came a damosell unto the haute prince, and complained that there was a knight the which hight Goneries, that withheld from her all her lands. And that same knight was there present, and cast his glove to him or to any that would fight in her name. So the damosell tooke up the glove all heavily, for default of a champion. Then there came a varlet to her, and said, 'Damosell, goe to such a knight, that lyeth heere beside in an hermitage, and that followeth the questing beast, and pray him to take the battaile upon him, and anon I wot well hee will take it upon him and graunt to you.' So anon shee tooke her palfray, and within a while shee found that knight, that was sir Palomides. And when shee had required him, he armed him, and rode with her, and made her to go to the haute prince to aske leave for her knight to doe battaile. And then the knights were ready in the field to just on horsebacke. And sir Palomides smote sir Gonereis downe to the earth, and then he rased off his helme and smote off his head. Then they went to supper. Then sir Galahalt the haute prince let cry, what knight somever hee was that smote downe sir Palomides should have his damosell to himselfe.

¹ *Meddle*.—Fight.² *Bigger*.—Stronger.

CHAP. CXXV.—*How sir Galahalt and Palomides fought together, and of sir Dinadan and sir Galahalt.*

HERE beginneth the second day. And as sir Palomides came into the field, sir Galahalt the haute prince was at the range end, and met with sir Palomides, and then they came so hard together that their speares all to-shevered; but sir Galahalt smote him so hard that he beare him backward over his horse, but yet hee lost not his stirops. Then they drew their swords, and lashed together many a sad strooke, that many worshipfull knights left their businesse to behold them. But at the last sir Galahalt the haute prince smote a strooke of might unto sir Palomides sore upon the helme, but the helme was so hard that the sword nothing might bite, but slipped, and smote of the head of the horse of sir Palomides. And when the haute prince saw the good knight fall downe to the earth, he was right sore ashamed of that strooke, and therewith hee alighted downe from his horse, and prayed the good knight sir Palomides to take that horse of his gift, and to forgive him that deede. 'Sir,' said sir Palomides, 'I thanke you of your great goodnesse, for ever of a man of worship a knight shall never have dishonour.' And so he mounted upon that horse, and the haute prince had another right soone. 'Now,' said the haute prince, 'I release unto you that maiden, for yee have wonne her.' So they departed¹, and sir Galahalt did great deeds of armes. And right so there came sir Dinadan, and encountered with sir Galahalt the haute prince; but when sir Dinadan saw that he might not get him to the earth, he said, 'My lord, I pray you leave me and take another.' The haute prince knew not sir Dinadan, and left goodly for his faire words, and so they departed. But shoone there came another, and told the haute prince that it was sir Dinadan. 'Forsooth,' said the haute prince, 'therefore am I heavy that he is so escaped from me; for with his mocks and japes now shall I never have done with him.' Then queene Guenever and sir Launcelot let blow unto lodging; and every knight unarmed him, and dressed him to the feast.

CHAP. CXXVI.—*How sir Archad appealed sir Palomides of treason, and how sir Palomides slew him.*

WHEN sir Palomides was unarmed, he asked lodging for himselfe and the damosell; and anon sir Galahalt the haute prince commanded them to lodging. And hee was not so soone in his lodging, but there came a knight that hight sir Archad, he was brother to sir Gonereis, that sir Palomides slew

¹ *Departed.* Separated from each other.

afore in the damosels quarell; and this knight sir Archad called sir Palomides traitour, and appelled him for the death of his brother. When the haute prince understood their quarrell, hee bad them goe to dinner, 'and as soone as yee have dined, looke that either knight be ready in the field.' So when they had dined, they were both armed, and the queene and the haute prince and sir Launcelot were set to behold them. And so they let run their horses, and there sir Palomides beare sir Archad on his speare over his horse taile. And then sir Palomides alighted and drew his sword; but sir Archad might not arise, and there sir Palomides rased of his helme and smote off his head. Then the haute prince and queene Guenever went to supper.

CHAP. CXXVII.—*Of the third day, and how sir Palomides justed with sir Lamoracke, and of other things.*

NOW beginneth the third day of justing, and at that day king Bagdemagus made him ready; and there came against him king Marsill, that had in gift an iland of sir Galahalt the haute prince, and this iland had the name Pomitaine. Then it befell that king Bagdemagus and king Marsill of Pomitaine met together with speares, and king Marsill had such a buffet that he fell over his horse croup. Then there came in a knight of king Marsils to revenge his lord, and king Bagdemagus smote him downe horse and man to the earth. So there came an earle that hight sir Arouse, and sir Breuse, and an hundred knights with them of Pomitaine, and the king of Northwaites was with them, and all these were against them of Surluse. And then there began a great battaile, and many knights were cast under the horses feete, and ever king Bagdemagus did best, for he began first, and ever hee held on. Also the duke Chailnes of Claraunce did there great deeds of armes; and there was no man that did so well as he, except king Bagdemagus and sir Palomides, so that the prise was given that day unto king Bagdemagus. And then they blew unto lodging, and unarmed them, and went to the feast. Right so there came sir Dinadan, and mocked and japed at king Bagdemagus, that all knights laughed at him, for he was a great bourder¹, and well loving all good knights. So anon as they had dined, there came a varlet bearing foure speares on his backe, and hee came to sir Palomides and said, 'Sir, heere is a knight heereby hath sent you the choise of foure speares, and requireth you for your ladies sake to take that one halfe of these speares, and just with him in the field.' So queene Guenever, the haute prince, and sir Launcelot, were set upon scaffolds to give the judgement of

¹ *Bourder*.—A joker.

these two knights. Then sir Palomides and the strange knight ranne so egerly together that their speares brake unto their hands. And then either tooke a greater speare, and then the knight smote downe sir Palomides horse and man to the earth; and as he would have passed over him, the strange knights horse stumbled and fell downe upon sir Palomides. Then they drew their swords and lashed together wondrous sore a great while. But ever the strange knight doubled his strookes, and put sir Palomides backe; therewith the haute prince cried hoo¹, and then they went unto lodging. And when they were unarmed, they knew it was the noble knight sir Lamoracke. Then queene Guenever said unto sir Launcelot, 'Sir, I require you that, as ye just any more, that yee just with none of the blood of my lord king Arthur.' So hee promised he would not as at that time.

CHAP. CXXVIII.—*Of the fourth day, and of many great feates of armes.*

NOW beginneth the fourth day. Then came into the field the king with the hundred knights, and all they of Northgalis, and the duke Chaleins of Claraunce, and king Marsill of Pomitane. And there came sir Safere, sir Palomides brother. And so they went into the field, and the damosell with them, and there came to encounter against them sir Bleoberis de Ganis and sir Ector de Maris. And sir Palomides encountred with sir Bleoberis, and either smote other downe, and in the same wise did sir Safere and sir Ector; and those two couples did battaile on foote. Then the king of Northgalis, the king with the hundred knights and king Marsil gathered their knights together and all they set upon sir Lamoracke, and he failed them not. And so the haute prince and queene Guenever said they saw never no knight doe such deeds of armes on horsebacke. 'Alas,' said sir Launcelot unto king Bagdemagus, 'I will arme me and helpe sir Lamoracke.' 'And I will ride with you,' said king Bagdemagus. And they came unto sir Lamoracke, which stood among thirtie knights. Then came there into the presse sir Launcelot, and he threw downe sir Mador de la Port, and with the truncheon of that speare he overthrew many good knights. And there king Bagdemagus smote on the right hand and on the left hand mervailously well. And then the three kings drew backe. And therewith the haute prince let blow unto lodging, and all the heraulds gave sir Lamoracke the degree. And all this while fought sir Palomides and sir Bleoberis de Ganis; and sir Safre and sir Ector fought on foote. Never were there foure knights everen matched. And then were they departed and had unto their lodging, and unarmed them, and so they went to the great feast.

¹ *Cried hoo.*—See before, book i. p. 76.

CHAP. CXXIX.—*Of the fifth day, and how sir Lamoracke behaved him.*

HERE beginneth the fifth day. So it befell that sir Palomides came in the meane season and proffered to just there as king Arthur was, in a castle there beside Surluse; and there encountred with him a worshipfull duke, and there sir Palomides smote him over his horse croupe, so that hee fell to the earth; and this duke was unkle unto king Arthur. Then sir Elis, his sonne, and sir Ewaine, and the three brothers of sir Gawaine, sir Mordred, sir Gaheris, and sir Agrawaine encountered with sir Palomides, and he strooke them all downe. 'Oh Jesu!' said king Arthur, 'this is a great despite of a Sarasin, that he shall thus smite downe my blood.' And therewith king Arthur was wood wroth, and thought to have made him ready to just. That espied sir Lamoracke, that king Arthur and his blood were discomfited, and anon he was ready, and asked sir Palomides if he would just any more. Then they came so fiersly together, that sir Palomides speare all to-brake, and sir Lamorackes did hold; therewith sir Palomides lost his stirops. And then sir Palomides returned againe, and tooke his damosell, and sir Safre returned his way. So when hee was departed, king Arthur came unto sir Lamoracke, and thanked him of his goodnesse, and praied him to tell him his name. 'Sir,' said sir Lamoracke, 'wit you well I owe you my service, but as at this time I will not abide heere, for I see of mine enemies many about mee.' 'Alas,' said king Arthur, 'now I wot well it is sir Lamoracke de Galis. O, sir Lamoracke, abide with mee, and, by my crowne, I shall never faile thee, and not so hardy in sir Gawaines head, nor none of his brethren, to doe thee any wrong.' 'Sir,' said sir Lamoracke, 'as at this time I may not abide with you, for I must goe unto the justs where as sir Launcelot is and the haute prince sir Galahalt.' Then there was a damosell which was daughter unto king Ban, and there was a knight Sarasin which hight sir Corsabrin, and he loved the damosell, and in no wise he would suffer her to be married; for ever this sir Corsabrin noysed¹ her, and named her that she was out of her mind; and thus he letted her that shee might not be married.

CHAP. CXXX.—*How sir Palomides fought with sir Corsabrin for a lady, and how sir Palomides slew sir Corsabrin.*

THEN by fortune this damosell heard tell that sir Palomides did much for damosels sakes: so she sent to him a pencell², and prayed him to fight sir Corsabrin for her love, and he

¹ *Noysed her*.—i.e. defamed her.

² *Pencell*.—*Pensel*, Caxton. A small standard or ensign, a pennon.

should have her and her lands of her fathers that should fall unto her. Then the damosell sent to sir Corsabrin, and bad him goe unto sir Palomides, that was a panim as well as he; and shee gave him warning that she had sent him her pencell, and if he might overcome sir Palomides, she would wed him. When sir Corsabrin wist of her deeds, then was hee wood wroth and angry, and rode to Surluse, where sir Galahalt the haute prince was, and there he found sir Palomides ready, which had the pensel; so they there waged battaile either with other afore sir Galahalt. 'Well,' said then the haute prince, 'this day must noble knights just, and at after dinner yee shall see how yee can spede.' Then they blew to justs, and after sir Dinadin had overthrowne sir Gerin and foure knights moe, sir Launcelot smote downe sir Dinadin, and sir Lamoracke also smote downe many knights. Then when dinner was done, they let blow to the field to behold sir Palomides and sir Corsabrin. Sir Palomides pight his pencell in the midst of the field, and then they hurled both together with their speares as it were thunder, and either smote other downe to the earth. Then sir Corsabrin gave unto sir Palomides such a buffet that hee made him to kneele upon one of his knees. Then sir Palomides arose up lightly, and gave him such a buffet upon the helme that he fell downe to the earth, and therewith hee rased off his helme, and said, 'Yeeld thee, or else thou shalt die of my hands.' 'Fie on thee,' said sir Corsabrin, 'doe the worst that thou canst.' Then hee smote off his head, and the corps was buried in a wood, because he was a paynim. Then they blew unto lodging, and sir Palomides was unarmed. Then hee went unto queene Guenever, to the haute prince, and unto sir Launcelot. 'Sir,' said the haute prince, 'heere have yee secne this day a great miracle by sir Corsabrin, what savour there was when the soule departed from the body; therefore, sir, we will require you for to take the holy baptisme upon you.' 'Sir,' said sir Palomides, 'I will that yee all know that into this land I am come to be christined; but I have made such a vow that I may not be christined till that I have done seaven true battailes for Jesus sake, and then will I bee christined; and I trust God will take mine intent, for I meane truely.'

CHAP. CXXXI.—*Of the sixth day, and what then was done.*

HEERE beginneth the sixth day. Then came there sir Gaheris, and there encountred with him sir Ossail¹ of Surluse, and sir Gaheris smote him over his horse croupe. So there came sir Dornard and sir Aglovaile, which were bretheren

¹ *Ossail*.—*Ossaise*, Caxton. •

unto sir Lamoracke, and they met with other two knights, and all foure knights were strooke to the ground. Then sir Lamoracke horsed his bretheren againe, and pulled downe many knights. Then came in duke Chaleins of Claraunce, the earle Ulbawes of Surluse, sir Ector, sir Bleoberis, and the king with the hundred knights. Then all men mervailed at the deedes of arms that sir Lamoracke did; for he fared so that there were many knights that fled.

Then they blew unto lodging, and the knights unarmed them, and drew them to their dinner. Thus they made great joy till on the morrow, and then they heard masse and blew to the field. And queene Guenever and all the estates were set, and judges armed cleane with their shields for to keepe the right.

CHAP. CXXXII.—*Of the seaventh battaile, and how sir Launcelot, being disguised like a maide, smote downe sir Dinadan.*

NOW beinneth the seaventh battaile. There came in the duke Cambines, and sir Aristaunce and the earle of Lamball, and sir Ossayll of Surlusse, and all they did greate deedes of armes. Then the king of Northwailes and the earle Ulbawes smote together that all the judges thought it was like mortall death. This meane while queene Guenever and the haute prince and sir Launcelot made sir Dinadan to make him ready to just. 'I would ride into the field,' said sir Dinadan, 'but then one of you two will meete there with me.' 'Perdieu!' said the haute prince, 'yee may behold and see how that we sit here as judges with our shields; and alway mayst thou behold whether that wee sit heere or not.' So sir Dinadan departed, and tooke his horse, and met with many knights, and did passing well. And as hee was departed, sir Launcelot disguised himselfe, and put upon his armour a maidens garment freshly attired. But when sir Dinadan saw a manner of damosell, hee dread perils that it was sir Launcelot disguised. But sir Launcelot came upon him so fast, that he smote him over his horse croupe. And then with great scornes they gate sir Dinadan into the Forrest there beside, and there they put upon him a womans garment, and so they brought him into the field. And then they blew unto lodging, and every knight went and unarmed him. And when queene Guenever saw sir Dinadan so brought in among them all, then she laughed, and so did all that were there. Then, by the assent of them all, they gave sir Launcelot the prise. The next was sir Lamoracke de Galis; the third was sir Palomides; the fourth was king Bagdemagus; so these foure noble knights had the prise. And there was great joy and great nobley¹ in all the court.

¹ *Nobley*.—Display of nobility.

And on the morrow queene Guenever and sir Launcelot departed unto king Arthur ; but in no wise sir Lamoracke would not goe with them, because that he misdoubted sir Gawaine and his brethren. Then sir Lamoracke departed from sir Launcelot, and either wept at their departing.

CHAP. CXXXIII.—*How by treason sir Tristram was brought unto a turnament for to have beene slaine, and how he was put in prison.*

NOW turne wee from this matter, and speake wee of sir Tristram. And now here beginneth the treason of king Marke that he hath ordained against sir Tristram. There was cried by the coasts¹ of Cornewaile a great turnament and justs ; and all was done by sir Galahalt the haute prince and king Bagdemagus, to the entent to slay sir Launcelot, because hee had alway the higher degree. And their counsaile was discovered unto king Marke, whereof he was full glad. And then king Marke bethought him that he would have sir Tristram unto that turnament disguised. But when they saw a knight disguised doe such deeds of armes, they weend that it had beene sir Launcelot, and in especiall king Marke said it was sir Launcelot plainly. Then there set upon him both Bagdemagus and the haute prince and their knights. Notwithstanding, for all the paine that sir Tristram had, he wanne the degree at that turnament, and there hee hurt and bruised many knights, and they also hurt him and bruised his wounds sore. So when the justs was all done, they knew well that it was sir Tristram de Lyones. And then king Marke made sir Tristram for to bee put in an horse litter, in signe of great love, and said, ' Faire nephew, I shall bee your lech my selfe.' And so hee rode forth with sir Tristram, and brought him to a castle by day light. And then king Marke made sir Tristram for to eate, and then after he gave him a drinke, the which as soone as hee had drunke it hee fell on sleepe. And when it was night hee made him for to be carried into another castle, and there he put him in a strong prison. Then was sir Tristram missed, and no creature wist where he was become. When the queene La beale Isoud heard how sir Tristram was missed previly she sent unto sir Sadocke, and prayed him to espie where sir Tristram was. Then sir Sadocke and two of his cosins laid them in an embushment fast by the castle of Tintagill, in armes ; and by fortune there came riding by them king Marke and foure of his nephewes, and a certaine of the traitours of Magouns. When sir Sadocke espied them, he brake out of the bushment and set upon them ; and when king Marke espied sir Sadocke, he fled as fast as he might ; and sir Sadocke slew all the foure nephewes unto king

¹ *Coasts.* — Sides ; quarters.

Marke. But these traitours of Magouns slew one of sir Sadocks cosins, and gave another a great wound in the necke. But sir Sadocke smote the other to death. Then sir Sadocke rode on his way unto a castle that was called Lyones, and there hee espied of the treason and felony of king Marke. So they of the castle rode with sir Sadocke till they came unto a castle that hight Albray¹, and there in the towne they found sir Dinas the seneshall. But when sir Sadocke had told sir Dinas of all the treason of king Marke, hee defied² such a king, and said hee would give up his lands that hee held of him. And when hee had said these words, all manner knights said as sir Dinas. Then by his advise and by sir Sadockes, hee let stuffe all the townes and castles within the countrey of Lyones³, and assembled all the people that they might make.

CHAP. CXXXIV.—*How king Marke let doe counterfeit letters from the pope, and how sir Percivale delivered sir Tristram out of prison.*

RETURNE we unto king Marke, that, when he was escaped from sir Sadocke, he rode unto the castle of Tintagill, and cried unto harneis all that were able to beare armes. When king Marke heard and understood how sir Sadocke and sir Dinas were risen in the countrey of Lyones, hee remembered him of wiles and treason. He let doe make and counterfeit letters from the pope, and made a strange clearke to beare them unto king Marke; the which letters specified that king Marke should make him ready, upon paine of cursing, with his hoost, for to come to the pope to helpe to goe to Jerusalem, for to make warre upon the Sarasins. When this clearke was come by the meanes of king Marke, anon forthwith king Marke sent these letters unto sir Tristram, and bad him to say thus, that, and hee would goe warre upon the Sarasins, he should be had out of prison, and to have all his power. When sir Tristram understood this letter, then hee said thus to the clearke, 'Ah! king Marke, ever hast thou, beene a traitour, and ever wilt be. But, sithen the apostle pope hath sent for him, bid him to goe thither himselfe; for I see I am well rewarded for my true service.' By then there were come foure wounded knights within the castle of Tintagill, and one of them his necke was nigh broken in twaine, another had his arme stricken away, the third was borne through with a speare, and the fourth had his teeth stricken in twaine. And when they came afore king Marke, they cried and said, 'King, why fliest thou not, for al this countrey is risen

¹ *Albray*.—*Arbray*, Caxton.

² *Defied*.—This was a feudal ceremony, by which the holder of a fief formally renounced his duties to the suzerain.

³ *Lyones*.—This, of course, is to be understood as a district in Cornwall, and not the Lionese in Britany of which Tristram was a native.

cleerely against thee?' And in the meane while there came into that countrey sir Percivale de Galis to seeke sir Tristram; and when he heard say that sir Tristram was in prison, sir Percivale made cleerely the deliverance of sir Tristram by his knightly meanes. And when he was so delivered, hee made great joye of sir Percivale, and so did each of other. So sir Percivale departed from sir Tristram, and rode streight to king Marke, and told him how he had delivered sir Tristram; and also hee told the king how hee had done himselfe great shame for to put sir Tristram in prison. And then sir Percivale departed from king Marke. And so when hee was departed, king Marke beethought him of more treason, notwithstanding that king Marke granted sir Percivale never by no manner of meanes to hurt sir Tristram. And then anon king Marke sent unto sir Dinas the seneshall, that hee should put downe all the people that he had raised, for hee sent him an oath that hee would goe himselfe unto the pope of Rome for to ware upon the Sarasins. And when the people were departed, every man to his home, then king Marke espied where was sir Tristram with La beale Isoud, and there by treason king Marke let take him and put him in prison, contrary to his promise that hee made unto sir Percivale. Then sir Tristram sent a letter unto La beale Isoud, and prayed her to be his good lady, and if it pleased her to make a vessel ready for her and him, he would goe with her to the realme of Logris, that is in this land. When sir Dinas the seneshall understood the treason of king Marke, he promised La beale Isoud that king Marke should be put in prison, and as they had devised so it was done. And then sir Tristram was delivered out of prison, and anon in all the hast La beale Isoud and sir Tristram went and tooke their counsell with those that they would have with them when they departed.

CHAP. CXXXV.—*How that sir Tristram and La beale Isoud came into England, and how that sir Launcelot brought them unto Joyous gard.*

THEN La beale Isoud and sir Tristram tooke their vessel, and came by water into this countrey; and so they were not in this countrey foure dayes but there came a crie of justs and turnement, which king Arthur let make. When sir Tristram heard tell of that turnement, hee disguised himselfe and La beale Isoud and rode unto that turnement; and when he came there, hee saw many knights just and turney, and so sir Tristram dressed him unto the range¹, and overthrew fourteene knights of the round table. And when sir Launcelot saw how all these knights were overthrowne, sir Launcelot dressed him unto sir Tristram. That saw La beale Isoud how

¹ *Unto the range.*—Into the rank.

that sir Launcelot was come into the field. Then La beale Isoud sent unto sir Launcelot a ring¹, and bad him wit that it was sir Tristram de Lioness. Then sir Launcelot espied whether that sir Tristram rode, and then hee rode after him; and then either made of other right great joy. And so sir Launcelot brought sir Tristram and La beale Isoud unto Joyous-gard, the which was his owne castle, and hee put that castle into their governance as their owne, and sir Launcelot charged all his people to honour them and love them as they would doe him selfe. So sir Launcelot departed, and rode to king Arthur, and then he told queene Guenever how hee that justed so well at the last turneyment was sir Tristram; and there hee told her how hee had with him La beale Isoud maugre king Marke. And so queene Guenever told all this unto her lord king Arthur. So because of sir Tristram, king Arthur let make a crie, that on May day should be a turneyment before the castle of Lonazep. And that castle was fast by Joyous-gard. So when sir Launcelot understood wherefore king Arthur made this justing, then he made such purvaiance that La beale Isoud should behold the justs in a secret place that was honest for her estate².

CHAP. CXXXVI.—*How, by the counsell of La beale Isoud, sir Tristram rode armed, and how hee met with sir Palomides.*

SO upon a day La beale Isoud said unto sir Tristram, 'I mervaile me greatly, that yee remember not your selfe, how that heere bee many perilous knights, and also that king Marke is full of treason, and that yee will ride thus for to chace and hunt unarmed, yee might be destroyed.' So then sir Tristram rode daily on hunting armed, and his men bearing his shield and his speare. So on a day, a little before the moneth of May, sir Tristram chased an hart passing egerly, and so the hart passed by a faire well. And then sir Tristram alighted and put off his helme for to drinke of that well³. Right so he heard and saw the questing beast come unto the well. So when sir Tristram espied that beast, he put his helme upon his head, for hee deemed he should here of Palomides, for that

¹ *A ring*.—In the Middle Ages the ring was an article of universal usage as a means of authenticating private messages and orders.

² *Howed for her estate*.—It is not easy to appreciate the sentiment of this passage.

given to sir Tristram and the wife of king Mark in a similar adulterous intercourse carried on in Lancelot's castle. As it is thought at the same time, that queen Isoude's position requires some concealment, a private lodge is made for her at the tournament, but fitted up in such a manner as became a queen, and apparently with the connivance of all these parties.

³ *of that well*.—*To drynke of that burbley water*, Caxton.

beast was in his quest. Right so sir Tristram saw where came a knight all armed upon a noble courser, and he saluted him, and they spake of many things. And this knights name was sir Breuse saunce Pitie. And right so foorthwith there came to them the good knight sir Palomides, and either saluted other, and speake faire that one to that other. And right so as they stood talking, they saw before them where came a knight all armed upon a great horse, and one of his men beare his shield and the other his speares. And anon as that knight espied them, hee gate his shield and a speare, and dressed him to just. 'Faire fellowes,' said sir Tristram, 'yonder is a knight that will just with us, let see which of us shall encounter with him, for I see well he is of king Arthurs court.' 'It shall not be long or hee bee met withall,' said sir Palomides, 'for I found never no knight in my quest of this glasting¹ beast but, and he would just, I never refused him.' So sir Palomides dressed him unto the other knight sir Bleoberis; and so they met so hard that sir Palomides fell to the earth horse and man. Then sir Bleoberis cried aloud, and said, 'Make the ready, thou false traitour knight sir Breuse saunce Pittie, for wit thou well certainly I will have to doe with thee to the uttermost, for all the noble knights and ladies which thou hast falsly betrayed.' When this false knight and traitour sir Breuse saunce Pittie heard him say so hee fled his way as fast as his horse might runne, and sir Bleoberis followed fast after him through thicke and thinne. And by fortune as sir Breuse saunce Pittie fled thus, hee saw before him three knights of the round table, that hight sir Ector de Maris, sir Percival de Galis, and sir Harry le fise Lake, a good knight and a hardy. When sir Breuse saw these three knights, hee rode straight unto them, and cried aloud unto them and prayed them of rescues. 'What need have yee?' said sir Ector. 'Ah, faire knights,' said sir Breuse, 'heere followeth mee the most traitour knight, and most coward, and most of vilany, his name is sir Breuse saunce Pittie, and if that hee may get mee, he will slay mee without any mercy or pitie.' 'Abide heere with us,' said sir Percival, 'and we shall warrant you.' Then were they ware of sir Bleoberis, that came riding in all the hast that he might. Then sir Ector put himselfe forth for to just afore them all; and when sir Bleoberis saw that they were foure knights, and hee but himselfe alone, hee stood in a doubt whether hee would turne or hold his way. Then he said to himselfe, 'I am a knight of the round table, and rather then I should shame mine oath and my blood, I will hold my way whatsoever fall thereof.' Then sir Bleoberis met first sir Ector and then sir Percival; and he smote them downe, both horse and man. When sir Harry saw that they were both

¹ *Glasting*.—Giving tongue. See before, book ii. p. 247.

on the earth, he said unto himselfe, that sir Breuse saunce Pittie was never of such prowesse; so sir Harry dressed his horse, and they met together so strongly that both horses and knights fell to the earth, but sir Bleoberis horse began to recover againe. That saw sir Breuse, and hee came hurling, and smote him over and over, and would have slaine him as hee lay on the ground. Then sir Harry le fise Lake arose lightly, and tooke the bridell of sir Breuse horse, and when sir Breuse saunce Pittie saw that hee might not choose nor have his unhappy will, he spake faire; and then sir Harry let him goe. And then anon hee made his horse to runne over sir Bleoberis, and rashed him unto the earth as though he would have slaine him. And when sir Harry saw him doe so villainously, he cried, 'Traitor knight, leave off for shame of thy selfe.' And as sir Harry would have taken his horse for to fight with sir Breuse, then sir Breuse ranne upon him as hee was halfe upon his horse, and smote him downe both horse and man to the earth, and had neere slaine sir Harry the good knight. Then sir Breuse fled all that ever he might, and sir Percival and sir Harry followed after him fast; but ever the longer they chased the further they were behind. Then they turned againe, and came to sir Ector de Maris and sir Bleoberis. 'Ah, faire knight,' said sir Bleoberis, 'why have yee succoured this false knight and traitour?' 'What is your name?' said sir Ector. 'My name is sir Bleoberis de Ganis.' 'Alas! faire cosin,' said sir Ector, 'forgive it mee, for I am sir Ector de Maris.' Then sir Percival and sir Harry made great joy that they had met with sir Bleoberis, but all they were heavy that sir Breuse was escaped them, whereof they made great dole and sorrow.

CHAP. CXXXVII.—*How sir Tristram met with sir Dinadan, and of their devises, and what he said unto sir Gawaines bretheren.*

NOW turne we unto sir Tristram, that, as hee rode on hunting, hee met with sir Dinadan, that was come into that countrey for to seeke sir Tristram. Then sir Dinadan told sir Tristram his name, but sir Tristram would not tell his name; wherefore sir Dinadan was wroth. 'For such a foolish knight as yee are,' said sir Dinadan, 'I saw but late to day lying by a well, and he fared as hee had slept, and there he lay like a foole gerning¹ and would not speake, and his shield lay by him, and his horse stode by him, and well I wot he was a lover.' 'Ah, faire sir,' said sir Tristram, 'are yee not a lover?' 'Mary, fie upon that craft,' said sir Dinadan. 'That is evill said,' quoth sir Tristram, 'for a knight may never bee

¹ *Gerning*.—i. e. grinning. *Grymmynge*, Caxton.

of prowess, but if hee bee a lover.' 'It is well said,' quoth sir Dinadan; 'now tell mee your name, sith ye be a lover, or else I shall doe battaile with you.' And thus as they still hoved, they saw a knight come riding against them. 'Loe,' said sir Tristram, 'see where cometh a knight riding that will just with you.' Anon, as sir Dinadan beheld him, he said, 'It is the same doting knight that I saw lye by the well neither sleeping nor waking.' 'Well,' said sir Tristram, 'I know that knight full well with the covered shield of asure; he is the kings sonne of Northumberland, whose name is sir Epinogris, and hee loveth the kings daughter of Wales, a faire lady; and now I suppose, and ye require him, hee will just with you, and then shall yee prove whether a lover be a better knight or yee, that will not love no lady.' And therewith sir Dinadan spake on hie, and said, 'Sir knight, make thee ready to just with me, for it is the custome of all arraunt knights one for to just with another.' And therewith they spurred their horses, and met together so hard that sir Epinogris smote downe sir Dinadan. Then sir Tristram rode to sir Dinadan, and said to him, 'How is it with you now? me thinketh that the lover hath right well sped.' 'Fie upon thee, coward,' said sir Dinadan, 'and if thou be any good knight, now revenge my shame.' 'Nay,' said sir Tristram, 'I will not just as at this time, but take your horse and let us goe from hence.' And so sir Tristram rode unto Joyous-gard, and there heard in that towne great noise and crie. 'What meaneth these noise?' said sir Tristram. 'Sir,' said they, 'heere is a knight of this castle which hath beene long among us, and right now he is slaine with two knights, and for none other cause but that our knight said that sir Lancelot was a better knight then was sir Gawaine.' When sir Tristram heard them say so, incontinent hee sent for his shield and for his speare, and lightly within a little while he had overtaken them, and bad them turne and amend that they had misdome. 'What amends wouldst thou have?' said that one knight. And therewith they tooke their course, and sir Tristram strooke first the one knight from his horse and then the other. And then they gate them upon their feete to doe their battaile unto the uttermost. 'Knights,' said sir Tristram, 'yee shall tell mee of whence yee are and what bee your names.' 'Wit thou well, sir knight,' said they, 'wee feare us not to tell thee our names, for wee are sir Agravaire le Desirous, and sir Gaheris, brothers unto the good knight sir Gawaine.' 'Well,' said sir Tristram, 'for king Arthurs sake I shall let you passe as at this time; but yee foure brethren be called the greatest destroyers and murderers of good knights that bee now in all this realme; for it is but late agone that sir Gawaine and yee slew among you a better knight than ever yee were, which was sir Lamoracke de Galis.' And therewith sir Tristram departed from

them, and rode toward Joyous-gard. And so when he was departed, they tooke their horses, and said the one to the other, 'Wee will overtake him and be revenged upon him in the despite of sir Lamoracke.'

CHAP. CXXXVIII.—*How sir Tristram smote downe sir Agravaine and sir Gahevis, and how sir Dinadan was sent for by the queene La beale Isoud.*

SO when they had overtaken sir Tristram, sir Agravaine bad him 'turne, traitour knight.' 'That is evill said,' quoth sir Tristram; and he therewith drew out his sword and smote sir Agravaine and sir Gahevis such mightie buffets that they both fell to the ground. And so sir Tristram rode straight unto Joyous-gard, and there he alighted and unarmed him. So sir Tristram told La beale Isoud of all his adventures, as yee have heard before. And when shee heard him tell of sir Dinadan shee said, 'Is not that hee that made the song by king Marke?' 'That same is he,' said sir Tristram, 'for hee is of all men the best bourder and japer, and is also a good knight of his hands, and the best fellow that I know, and all good knights love his fellowship.' 'Alas,' said shee, 'why brought yee not him with you?' And even so there came in a varlet and told sir Tristram how there was come in an arrant knight into the towne, with such colours upon his shield. 'That is sir Dinadan,' said sir Tristram; 'send yee for him, my lady Isoud and I will not bee seene, and yee shall heare the meriest knight that ever yee spake withall, and the maddest talker, and I pray you heartily that yee make him good cheere.' Then anon La beale Isoud sent into the towne, and prayed sir Dinadan that hee would come into the castle and rest him there with a lady. Anon La beale Isoud came unto him, and either saluted other. Then she asked him of whence he was. 'Madame,' said sir Dinadan, 'I am of king Arthurs court, and knight of the round table, and my name is sir Dinadan.' 'What doe yee in this countrey?' said La beale Isoud. 'Madame,' said hee, 'I seeke the noble knight sir Tristram, for it was told me that he was in this countrey.' 'It may well bee,' said La beale Isoud, 'but I am not ware of him.' 'Madame,' said sir Dinadan, 'I mervaile of sir Tristram and moe other lovers, what ayleth them to be so mad and so assotted upon women.' 'Why,' said La beale Isoud, 'are yee a knight and bee yee no lover? it is shame unto you; wherefore yee may not bee called a good knight, but if that yee make a quarrell for a lady.' 'God defend mee,' said sir Dinadan, 'for the joy of love is to short, and the sorrow and what commeth thereof endureth over long.' 'Now I pray you,' said La beale Isoud, 'tell me wil ye fight for my love with

three knights that done mee great wrong? and in so much as yee be a knight of king Arthurs court, I require you to doe battaile for me.' Then sir Dinadan said, 'I shall say unto you, yee are as faire a lady as ever I saw any, and much fairer then is my lady queene Guenever; but I will not fight for you with three knights, Jesu defend mee.' Then La beale Isoud laughed, and had good game at him; so he had all the cheere that shee might make him, and there he lay all that night.

CHAP. CXXXIX.—*How sir Dinadan met with sir Tristram, and how, with justing with sir Palomides, sir Dinadan knew him.*

THEN after this sir Dinadan departed, and rode his way a great pace till hee had overtaken sir Tristram; and when sir Dinadan had overtaken him, he knew him anon, and hated the fellowship of him above all other knights. 'Ah!' said sir Dinadan, 'art thou that coward knight which I met with yesterday! keepe thee, for thou shalt just with me maugre thy head.' And so they let their horses runne, and sir Tristram missed of him wilfully, and sir Dinadan brake his speare upon sir Tristram. And therewith sir Dinadan began to draw out his sword. 'I will not fight,' said sir Tristram, 'but I will waite upon you and bee under your protection, for because yee are so good a knight yee may save mee.' So thus as they rode talking, they saw where came a knight arraunt before them dressing him for to just. 'Loe,' said sir Tristram, 'yonder is one will just; now dresse thee to him.' 'A! shame betide thee!' said sir Dinadan. 'Nay, not so,' said sir Tristram, 'for that knight seemeth a shrew.' 'Then shall I,' said sir Dinadan. And so they met together so hard that the other knight smote downe sir Dinadan from his horse. 'Loe,' said sir Tristram, 'it had beene better that yee had left.' 'Fie on thee, coward!' said sir Dinadan. Then sir Dinadan start up, and gate his sword in his hand, and proffered to doe battaile on foote. 'Whether in love or in wrath?' said the other knight. 'Let us doe battaile in love,' said sir Dinadan. 'What is your name?' said that knight, 'I pray you tell mee.' 'Wit yee well my name is sir Dinadan.' 'Ah, sir Dinadan,' said that knight, 'and my name is sir Gareth, the yongest brother unto sir Gawaine.' Then either made of other great joy, for this sir Gareth was the best knight of all those bretheren, and he proved a full good knight. Then were they ware where there came a knight before them well horsed and well armed. 'Faire knights,' said sir Tristram, 'looke betweene you who shall just with yonder knight, for I warne you I will not have to doe with him.' 'Then shall I,' said sir Gareth. And so they encountred together, and there that knight smote downe sir

Gareth over his horse croupe. 'How now?' said sir Tristram unto sir Dinadan, 'dresse thee now, and revenge the good knight sir Gareth.' 'That shall I not,' said sir Dinadan, 'for hee hath stricken downe a much bigger knight then I am.' 'A!' said sir Tristram, 'now, sir Dinadan, I see full well that your heart faileth you, therefore now shall yee see what I shall doe.' And then sir Tristram hurled unto that knight, and smote him quite from his horse. And when sir Dinadan saw that, hee marvelled greatly, and then hee deemed in himselfe that it was sir Tristram. Then the knight that was on foote dressed his shield and drew out his sword for to do battaile. 'What is your name?' said sir Tristram. 'Wit you well,' said the knight, 'my name is sir Palomides.' 'Yee say well,' said sir Tristram, 'and wit yee well that I am sir Tristram de Lioness, and if ye have to me evill will, ye may right it, for I am ready at your hand.' 'Not so, my lord sir Tristram; I will doe you knightly service in all things, as ye will com-mande me.' 'And so will I take you,' said sir Tristram. And so they rode foorth on their way, talking of many things. 'O my lord sir Tristram,' said sir Dinadan, 'foule have ye mocked me; for God knoweth I came into this cuntry for your sake, and by the advise of my lord sir Launcelot, and yet would not sir Launcelot tell me the certaine of you, where I should find you.' 'Truly,' said sir Tristram, 'sir Launcelot wist well enough where I was, for I abode within his owne castle of Joyous-gard.'

CHAP. CXL.—*How they approached the castle of Lonazep, and of other devises of the death of sir Lamoracke.*

THUS they rode untill they were ware of the castle of Lonazep, and than were they ware of foure hundred tents and pavilions, and mervailous great ordinance. 'So God me helpe,' said sir Tristram, 'yonder I see the greatest ordeinance that ever I saw.' 'Sir,' said sir Palomides, 'me seemeth there was as great an ordinance at the castle of Maidens upon the roch, and in Surluse, where there were many nations, and where sir Launcelot du Lake and sir Lamoracke de Galis both fought passing well; but sir Launcelot wanne the degree.' 'I doubt not,' said sir Tristram, 'but he wan the degree, so that he had not beene overmatched with many knights. And the death of sir Lamoracke was over great pitie; and, if they were all the cosins of my lord king Arthur that slew him, they should die for it; and for such things I feare to draw unto the court of my lord king Arthur.' 'Sir, I blame you

¹ *Lonazep*.—It would appear by the narrative that Lonazep was at no great distance from Joyous-gard.

not,' said sir Gareth, 'for wel I understand the vengeance of my brethren sir Gawaine, sir Agravaïne, sir Gaheris, and sir Mordred; but for me, I meddle not of their matters, therefore there is none of them that loveth me, and would God I had beene by, when the noble knight sir Lamoracke was slaine.' 'Now as Jesu be my helpe,' said sir Tristram, 'it is well said of you, for I had leaver then all the gold betweene this and Rome I had beene there.' 'Truly,' said sir Palomides, 'I would I had beene there, and yet I had never the degree at no justs there as he was. And when the degree was given him by my lord king Arthur, sir Gawaine and his three bretheren, sir Agravaïne, sir Gaheris, and sir Mordred, set upon sir Lamoracke in a privy place, and there they slew his horse, and so they fought with him on foote more than three houres, both before him and behind him. And sir Mordred gave him his death wound behind him at his backe, and all to-hewed him; for one of his squires told me that saw it.' 'Fie upon treason,' said sir Tristram, 'for it killeth my heart to heere this tale.' 'So doth it mine,' said sir Gareth; 'bretheren as they bee mine, I shall never love them nor draw me to their fellowship for that deed.' 'Now speake wee of other deeds,' said sir Palomides, 'and let him bee, for his life yee may not get againe.'

CHAP. CXLI.—*How they came to Humber banke. and how they found there a ship, in which ship lay the dead body of king Hermance.*

THUS they rode till they came to Humber banke, where they heard a doleful crie. Then were they ware in the wind where came a rich vessell covered over with red silke, and the vessell landed fast by them. Therewith sir Tristram and his company alighted; so sir Tristram went before into the vessell. When he came within, he saw a faire bed richly covered, and thereupon lay a seemely dead knight, all armed save the head, all bebled¹ with deadly wounds upon him, which seemed to bee a passing good knight. 'How may this bee,' said sir Tristram, 'that this knight is thus slaine?' Then hee was ware of a letter in the dead knights hand. 'Masters mariners,' said he, 'what meaneth that letter?' 'Sir,' said they, 'in that letter yee shall here and know how he was slaine, and of what cause, and what was his name. But wit yee well, no man shall take that letter and read it but if he be a good knight, and that hee will faithfully promise to revenge his death, else shall there no knight see that letter open.' And therewith sir Tristram tooke the letter out of the knights hand, and it said thus: 'Hermance, king and lord of the red citie, I send to all knights

¹ *Bebled*.—Covered with blood; bloody.

arraunt recommendation, and unto you, noble knights of king Arthurs court, I beseech them all among them to find one knight that will fight for my sake with two brethren, that I brought up of nought, and feloniously and traitorously they have slaine mee: and hee that revengeth my death, I will that hee have my red citie and all my castels.' 'So God me helpe,' said sir Tristram, 'here is a piteous case, and full faine I would take this enterprise upon mee, but I have made such a promise, that needs I must be at this great turneyment or else I am shamed. For my lord king Arthur let make these justs and turneyment in this countrey for my sake; and well I wot that many worshipfull estates will bee at that turneyment for to see mee.'

'Sir,' said sir Palomides, 'I pray you give me this enterprise, and yee shall see me atchieve it worshipfully, or else I shall die in this quarrell.' 'Well,' said sir Tristram, 'and this enterprise I give you, with this that yee bee with me at this turneyment that shall be as at this day seven dayes.' 'Sir,' said sir Palomides, 'I promise you that I shall be with you at that day, if I bee unsleine or unmaimed.'

CHAP. CXLII.—*How sir Tristram with his fellowship came and were with an hoost, which after fought with sir Tristram, and of other matters.*

AND then departed sir Tristram, sir Gareth, and sir Dinadan, and left sir Palomides in the vessell, and so sir Tristram beheld the marriners how they sayled overlong¹ Humber. And when sir Palomides was out of their sight, they were ware of a knight that came riding against them unarmed, and nothing about him but a sword, and when this knight came nigh them he saluted them, and they him againe. 'Faire knights,' said that knight, 'I pray you in so much as yee are knights arraunt, that yee will come and see my castle, and take such as yee find there, I pray you heartily.' And so they rode with him to his castle; and there they were brought to the hall, that was well appareled, and so they were unarmed and set at a bord. And when this knight saw sir Tristram, anon he knew him; and then this knight waxed pale and wroth at sir Tristram. When sir Tristram saw his hoost make such cheere, he marvailed greatly, and said, 'Sir, mine hoost, what cheere make yee?' 'Wit thou well,' said he, 'I fare much the worse for thee; for I know thee well, sir Tristram de Lioness, thou slew my brother, and therefore I give thee summons that I will sley thee and I may get thee at large.' 'Sir knight,' said sir Tristram, 'I am not advised that ever I slew any brother of yours; and if yee

¹ *Overlong*.—A not very common word, but apparently equivalent to along over, or perhaps simply to along.

say that I did it, I will make you amends unto my power.' 'I will none of your amends,' said the knight, 'but keepe thee from me.' So when hee had dined, sir Tristram asked his armes and departed; and so they rode forth on their way. And within a little while sir Dinadan saw where came a knight riding all armed and well horsed without shield. 'Sir Tristram,' said sir Dinadan, 'take heede to your selfe, for I undertake that yonder commeth your hoost that will have to doe with you.' Anon that knight cried to sir Tristram, and bad him abide and keepe him well. So they hurled together, but sir Tristram smote the other knight so sore that he bare him to the ground. 'Sir knight,' said sir Tristram, 'I pray you to leave off and smite me no more, for I would bee loath to deale with you and I might choose, for I have your meate and your drinke within my body.' For al that hee would not leave; and then sir Tristram gave him such a buffet upon the helme that he tumbled upside downe from his horse, that the blood brast out at the ventailes of his helme; and there hee lay still likely to have died. Then sir Tristram said, 'Mee repenteth of this buffet that I smote so sore, for, as I suppose, he is dead.' And so they departed and rode forth on their way. So they had not riden but a while but they saw comming against them two full likely knights, well armed and horsed, and goodly servants about them. The one was sir Berraunt le Apres¹, and he was called the king with the hundred knights, and that other was sir Segwarides, which were renowned² two noble knights. So as they came either by other, the king looked upon sir Dinadan, which at that time had sir Tristrams helme upon his shoulder, which helme the queene of Northwales had given unto La beale Isoud, and the queene La beale Isoud gave it unto sir Tristram. 'Sir knight,' said sir Berraunt, 'where had ye that helme?' 'What would you therewith?' said sir Dinadan. 'For I will have to doe with thee,' said the king, 'for the love of her that owed that helme, and therefore keepe thee.' So they departed, and came together with all the might that their horses could runne, and so the king with the hundred knights smote sir Dinadan horse and all to the earth. And then hee commanded his servant to goe and take the helme off, and keepe it, and so the varlet went and unbuckled his helme. 'What wilt thou doe?' said sir Tristram; 'leave that helme.' 'To what entent,' said the king, 'will ye meddle, sir knight, with that helme?' 'Wit ye well,' said sir Tristram, 'that helme shall not depart from niece or that it be dearer bought.' 'Then make you ready to just with mee,' said sir Berraunt to sir Tristram. So they hurled together, and there sir Tristram gave sir Berraunt such a buffet upon the

¹ *Sir Berraunt le Apres.*—*Berraunce*, and *Berraunt*, Caxton. On the king with the hundred knights, see before, book i. p. 68.

² *Renowned.*—The old form of renowned; Fr. *renommé*.

helme that he fel downe over his horse sore astonied¹. 'Lo,' said sir Dinadan, 'that helme is unhappie to us twaine, for I had a fall for it, and now, sir king, ye have another fall' Then sir Segwarides asked, 'Who shall just with me?' Then sir Gareth dressed him to sir Segwarides, and there sir Segwarides smote sir Gareth, that horse and man fell to the earth. 'Now,' said sir Tristram to sir Dinadan, 'just with yonder knight.' 'I will not meddle,' said sir Dinadan. 'Then will I,' said sir Tristram. And then sir Tristram ranne to him and gave him a fall, and so they left them on foote. And sir Tristram rode unto Joyous-gard, and there sir Gareth would not of his curtesie have gone into the castle, but sir Tristram would not suffer him to depart; and so they alighted, and unarmed them, and had there great cheere.

CHAP. CXLIII.—*How sir Palomides went for to fight with two brethren for the death of king Hermaunce.*

NOW will we leave them within Joyous-gard, and speake wee of sir Palomides. Then sir Palomides sailed even along Humber unto the coaste of the sea, where was a faire castle, and at that time it was early in the morning afore day. Then the mariners went unto sir Palomides, that was fast on sleepe: 'Sir knight,' said the mariners, 'yee must arise, for here is a castle into the which ye must goe.' And therewithall hee arived; and then he blew his horne, the which the mariners had given him. And when they that were within the castle heard that horne, they put forth many knights, and there they stood upon the wals and said with one voice, 'Welcome be ye to this castle.' And then it waxed cleere day, and sir Palomides entred into the castle; and within a while he was well served with many divers meates; and then sir Palomides heard about him much weeping and great dole. So there came before him one whose name was sir Ebell, that said thus: 'Wit ye well, sir knight, this dole and sorrow is here made every day, and for this cause: we had a king that hight Hermaunce, and hee was king of the red citie, and this king, that was our lord, was a noble knight, large and liberall of his expence; and in the world hee loved no thing so much as he did arraunt knights of king Arthurs court, and all justing, hunting, and all manner of knightly games.' 'Tell me,' said sir Palomides, 'in what manner was your lord slaine, and by whome?' 'Sir,' said sir Ebell, 'our king brought up of children two men that now are perillous knights, and these two knights our king had in so great favour that he loved no man nor trusted no man so well. And also he was so free and so gentle, and they so false and

¹ *Astonied.*—Stunned.

deceivable, that they ruled him as they list; and that espied the lords of our kings blood, and departed from him unto their own livelode¹. Then when these two traitours understood that they had driven all the lords of his blood from him, they were not pleased with that rule, but then they sought to have more; and this is the end and conclusion. My lord and king rode unto the forrest by the advise of these false traitours, and there he chased at the red dere; and so for labour hee waxed dry, and then hee alighted and dranke at a well. And when hee was alighted, by the assent of these two false traitours, the one that hight Heliuss sodainly smote our king through the body with a speare, and so they left him there; and when they were departed, then by fortune I came unto the well and found my lord and king wounded unto the death; and when I heard his complaint, I let bring him to the water side, and in that same ship I put him alive. And when my lord king Hermaunce was in that vessel, he required mee for the true faith that I owed unto him for to write a letter, in this manner:—

CHAP. CXLIV.—*The copy of the letter written for to revenge the kings death, and how sir Palomides fought for to have the battaile.*

‘THIS letter,’ said sir Ebell, ‘I wrote by my lords commandement, and then he received his maker².’ And when he was dead, hee commanded mee, or ever he were cold, to put this leter fast in his hand; and then that I should give these mariners in command never to stint untill that they came to Logris, where all the noble knights shall assemble at this time.’ ‘Truly,’ said sir Palomides, ‘it grieveth my heart for to heere you tell this dolefull tale; and to say the truth, I saw the same letter that yee spake of, and one of the best knights of the world red that letter to mee; and by his command I am come hither to revenge your kings death, and let me wit where I shall find these traitours, for I shall never be at my hearts ease till that I have beene in hand with them.’ ‘Sir,’ said sir Ebell, ‘then take your ship againe, and that shippe must bring you to the delectable ile, fast by the red cittie, and we that be here shall pray for you and abide your againe-comming³.’ Then sir Palomides departed from the castle; and as hee came nigh unto the city, there came out of a ship a goodly knight all armed against him, and anon as hee came nigh sir Palomides, he said, ‘Sir knight, what seeke yee heere in this country? leave this quest, for it is mine, and mine it was or it was yours, and therefore I will have it.’ And then they dressed their shields, and

¹ *Their owne livelode.*—Their own estates.

² *Received his maker.*—i. e. received the communion.

³ *Againe-comming.*—Return.

drew out their swords, and thus they fought more then an houre. And at the last sir Palomides waxed big and better winded, so that then hee smote that knight such a strooke that hee made him to kneele upon both his knees. Then that knight speake on high and said, 'Gentle knight, hold thy hand.' Sir Palomides was curteous and withdrew his hand. Then this knight said, 'Wit ye well, sir knight, that ye be better worthy to have this battaile than I, and I require thee of thy knighthood to tell mee thy name.' 'Sir, my name is sir Palomides, a knight of king Arthurs court and of the round table, that hither am come to revenge the death of this dead king.'

CHAP. CXLV.—*Of the preparation of sir Palomides and the two brethren that should fight with him.*

'**A**H, well be ye found,' said the knight unto sir Palomides, 'for of all knights that bee now living (except three) I had levest have you. The first is sir Launcelot du Lake, the second is sir Tristram de Liones. and the third is my nigh cosin sir Lamorake de Galis; and I am brother unto king Hermaunce that is dead, and my name is sir Hermind.' 'It is well said,' quoth sir Palomides, 'and yee shall see how I shall speede; and if I bee there slaine, goc yee unto my lord sir Launcelot or unto my lord sir Tristram. and pray them to revenge my death, for as for sir Lamorake, him shall ye never see in this world.' 'Alas!' said sir Hermind, 'how may that be?' 'He is slaine,' said sir Palomides, 'by sir Gawaine and his bretheren.' 'So God me helpe,' said sir Hermind, 'there was not one for one that slew him.' And so sir Palomides told sir Hermind all the manner, and how they slew sir Lamorake all only by treason. So sir Palomides tooke his ship, and arived up at the delectable ile. And in the meane while sir Hermind, the kings brother, arived up at the red citie, and sent to the two bretheren, and bad them make them ready, for there was come a knight that would fight with them both. So the messenger went unto them where they were in a castle there beside; and there hee told them how there was a knight come of king Arthurs court for to fight with them both at once. 'Hee is right welcome,' said they all. 'But tell mee, wee pray you, if it bee sir Launcelot or any of his blood.' 'Hee is none of his blood,' said the messenger. 'Then care we the lesse,' said the two bretheren, 'for with none of the blood of sir Launcelot we keepe not to have to doe withall.' 'Wit ye well,' said the messenger, 'that his name is sir Palomides, the which is not yet christned, a noble knight.' So they appointed for to bee at the cittie within two dayes. And when sir Palomides was come unto the cittie, they made passing great joy of him: and though he was not christned, yet hee beleved in the best manner, and was faithful

and true of his promise, and also wel conditioned. So within the third day there came to this cittie these two bretheren, the one hight sir Helius, and that other hight sir Helake, the which were men of great prowesse, how be it they were false and ful of treason, and but poore men borne, yet were they noble knights of their hands.

And with them they brought fortie knights, to the entent they should be big enough for the red cittie. Thus come the two bretheren with great bobance¹ and pride, for they had put the red cittie in feare and damage. Then they were brought unto the lists; and sir Palomides came into the place, and thus he said, 'Bee yee the two bretheren, sir Helius and sir Helake, that slew your king and lord sir Hermaunce by felony and treason, for whom I am come hither for to revenge his death?' 'Wit thou well,' said sir Helius and sir Helake, 'that wee are the same knights which slew king Hermaunce; and wit thou well, sir Palomides, sarasin, that we shall handle thee so or thou depart, that thou shalt wish that thou were christned.'

CHAP. CXLVI.—*Of the battaile of sir Palomides and the two bretheren, and how the two bretheren were slaine.*

THEY departed, and the two brethren came against sir Palomides as fast as ever their horses might runne; and by fortune sir Palomides smote sir Helake through his shield and through the brest more than a fadome. All this while sir Helius held up his speare, and for pride and presumption he would not smite sir Palomides with his speare; but when he saw his brother lye on the ground he said unto sir Palomides, 'Helpe thy selfe.' And therewith hee came hurling unto sir Palomides with his speare, and smote him quite from his saddle. Then on foote they fought without any resting two large houres, and never breathed them. And then sir Palomides smote sir Helius with such a might, that hee fell upon the ground groveling; and then he rashed off his helme and smote his head from the body. And then were the people of the cittie the joyfullest people that might bee. So they brought him unto his lodging with great solemnitie, and there all the people became his men; and then sir Palomides said to them, 'I may not at this time abide with you, for I must in all the hast be with my lord king Arthur at the castle of Lonazep, which I have promised.' So then were the people full heavie of his departing; but in no wise at that time hee would abide; and so sir Palomides departed. And then he came unto the castle whereas sir Ebell was lieuutenant; and when they that were in the castle knew how sir Palomides had sped, there was a joyfull meyny². And

¹ *Bobance*.—Boasting. The edition of 1634 has, erroneously, *bondance*.

² *Meyny*.—Household.

sir Palomides departed, and came to the castle of Lonazep. And when he wist that sir Tristram was not there, he tooke his way unto Humber and came unto Joyous-gard, whereas sir Tristram was and La beale Isoud.

CHAP. CXLVII.—*How sir Tristram and sir Palomides met with sir Breuse saunce Pittie, and how sir Tristram and La beale Isoud went to Lonazep.*

AND then sir Tristram desired sir Palomides for to ride into the fields and woods: so they were accorded for to rest them in the forrest. And anon they were ware of an armed knight that came riding against them, and there either saluted other. Then this armed knight spake unto sir Tristram, and asked him what were those knights that were lodged in Joyous-gard. 'I wot not what they are,' said sir Tristram. 'What knights are ye?' said that knight; 'for me seemeth that yee are no knights arraunt, because that yee ride unarmed.' 'Whether we be knights or not, we list not to tell thee our names.' 'Wilt thou not tell me thy name?' said that knight; 'then keepe thee, for thou shalt die of my hands.' And therewith hee gat his speare in his hand, and would have runed through sir Tristram. That saw sir Palomides, and smote his horse ourthwart¹ the middest of the side, that man and horse fell to the ground. And therewithall sir Palomides alighted, and drew out his sword to have slaine him. 'Let bee,' said sir Tristram, 'slay him not, the knight is but a foole, it were shame for to sleigh him; but take away his speare, and let him take his horse and goe where he will.' So when this knight arose, he groned sore of that fall, and so hee tooke his horse by the bridel. And when he was up, then he turned his horse and required sir Tristram and sir Palomides to tell him what knights they were. 'Now wit yee well,' said sir Tristram, 'that my name is sir Tristram de Liones, and this knights name is sir Palomides.' When he wist what they were, he smote his horse with the spurs because they should not aske him his name, and so rode fast away through thick and thin. Then came there by them a knight with a bended shield of asure², whose name was sir Epinogris, and he came toward them a great gallop. 'Whither are yee riding?' said sir Tristram. 'My faire lords,' said sir Epinogris, 'I follow the falsest knight that now beareth life, wherefore I require you tell me if yee saw him, for he beareth a shield with a chase³ of red over it.' 'So God me helpe,' said sir Tristram, 'such a knight departed from us not a quarter of an

¹ *Ourthwart*.—Across. *Traverse*, Caxton.

² *A bended shield of asure*.—i. e. a shield, with bends asure.

³ *Chase*.—Caas, Caxton.

houre agoe; we pray you tell us his name.' 'Alas,' said sir Epinogris, 'why let yee him escape from you? and he is so great foe unto all arraunt knights, and his name is sir Breuse saunce Pittie.' 'A! fie for shame,' said sir Palomides; 'alas, that ever he escaped my hands, for he is the man in the world that I hate most.' Then sir Epinogris departed, and followed the chase after him. Then sir Palomides talked unto sir Tristram of his battaile at the red citie, and, as yee have heard before. So when they came to Joyous-gard sir Palomides would not have gone into the castle, but as sir Tristram tooke him by the finger and led him into the castle. And when sir Palomides saw queene La beale Isoud, he was so ravished that unnethes hee might speake. And on the morrow they were apparaled to ride toward Lonazep. So sir Tristram had three squiers, and La beale Isoud had three gentlewomen; and thus they rode forth. So as they rode, before them they saw a rowte of knights; it was the knight sir Galihodin, with twentie knights with him. 'Faire felowes,' said sir Galihodin, 'yonder cometh foure knights and a rich and a full faire lady, I am in will to take that lady from them.' So came a squire to sir Tristram, and asked them whether they would just or else leese their lady. 'Sir,' said sir Palomides, 'and it please you, let mee have this deed, and I shall undertake foure of them.'

CHAP. CXLVIII.—*How sir Palomides justed with sir Galihodin, and after with sir Gawaine, and smote them downe.*

THEN the squire departed, and told sir Galihodin his answer. And then sir Palomides encountered first sir Galihodin, and then another knight and the third and the fourth and hee smoote them all over their horses croupes; and alwaies sir Palomides speare was whole. Then there came sixe knights moe of sir Galihodins men, and would have beene revenged upon sir Palomides. 'Let bee,' said sir Galihodin, 'not so hardy none of you all to meddle with this knight, for he is a man of great bountie and honour.' And so they held them still. And sir Palomides was alway ready to just; and when he saw they would no more, hee rode unto sir Tristram. This sir Galihodin was nigh cosin unto sir Galahalt the haut prince, and this sir Galihodin hath beene a king within the countrey of Surluse. So as sir Tristram, sir Palomides, and La beale Isoud rode together, they saw before them foure knights. The first was sir Gawaine, the second was sir Ewane, the third was sir Sagamore le Desirous, and the fourth was sir Dodinas le Savage. When sir Palomides beheld them that they were ready to just, he prayed sir Tristram for to give him leave to have to doe with them as long as he might

hold him on horsbacke, 'and, if I bee smitten downe, I pray you revenge me.' And therewith sir Gawaine and sir Palomides came so egerly together that sir Palomides smote sir Gawaine to the ground horse and man; and in the same wise he served sir Ewaine, sir Dodinas, and sir Sagramore. And then sir Tristram departed toward Lonazep. And when they were departed, then came thither sir Galihodin, with his ten knights, unto sir Gawaine, and there hee told him all how he had sped. 'And that knight upon the white horse smote me downe,' said sir Galihodin, 'and my three fellowes.' 'And so he did to mee,' said sir Gawaine; 'and well I wot,' said sir Gawaine, 'that either he that is upon the white horse is sir Tristram, or else sir Palomides, and that gay-beseene¹ lady is queene La beale Isoud.' Thus they talked of one thing and of other; and in the meane while sir Tristram passed forth on till hee came to the well where his two pavilions were set, and there they alighted, and there they saw many pavilions and great araie. Then sir Tristram left there sir Palomides and sir Gareth with La beale Isoud; and sir Tristram and sir Dinadan rode to Lonazep to heere tidings, and sir Tristram rode upon sir Palomides white horse. And when he came to the castle, sir Dinadan heard a horne blow, and by that horne drew many knights. Then sir Tristram asked a knight what ment the blast of that horne. 'Sir,' said that knight, 'it is all those that shall hold against king Arthur at this turneyment; the first is the king Marhalt of Ireland, and the king of Surluse, the king of Listnoyse, the king of Northumberland, and the king of the best part of Wales, and with many other countries; and all these draw them unto a counsaile to understand what governance they should be of.' And when sir Tristram had heard all their counsaile, he rode unto king Arthur for to heare of his counsaile.

CHAP. CXLIX.—*How sir Tristram and his fellowship came unto the turnement of Lonazep, and of divers other justs and matters.*

BUT sir Tristram was not so soone come to the place, but sir Gawaine and sir Galihodin went unto king Arthur and told him that 'the same greene knight in the greene harneis with the white horse smote us two downe and sixe of our fellowes this same day.' 'Well,' said king Arthur. And then he called sir Tristram, and asked him what was his name. 'Sir,' said sir Tristram, 'yee shall hold me excused as at this time, for ye shal not know my name.' And then sir Tristram returned, and rode his way. 'I mervaille me much,' said king

¹ *Gay-beseene*.—Gaily dressed.

Arthur, 'that yonder knight will not tell me his name; but goe thou, sir Griflet le fise de Dieu, and pray him to speak with me betweene us two.' Then sir Griflet rode after him, and over-tooke him, and said unto him that king Arthur prayed him to speake with him secretly apart. 'Upon that covenant,' said sir Tristram, 'I will speake with him, that I will returne againe, so that yee will ensure mee not to desire to here my name.' So they rode together till they came unto king Arthur. 'Faire sir,' said king Arthur, 'what is the cause that yee will not tell mee your name?' 'Sir,' said sir Tristram, 'without a cause I will not hide my name.' 'Upon what partie will yee hold?' said king Arthur. 'Truly, my lord,' said sir Tristram, 'I can not tell you yet on what partie I will be untill I come into the field, and there as my heart giveth me, there will I hold; but to morrow yee shall see and prove on what part I shall come.' And therewith he turned and went to his pavilion. And on the morrow they armed them all in greene, and came into the field, and their young knights began to just, and did many worshipfull deedes. Then spake sir Gareth unto sir Tristram, and prayed him to give him leave to break his spear, for he thought shame to beare his spere hole again. When sir Tristram heard him say so, hee laughed, and said, 'I pray you, doe your best.' Then sir Gareth tooke his horse, and proffered to just. That saw a nephew unto the king of the hundred knights, his name was sir Selises, and a good man of armes; so this knight sir Selises dressed him unto sir Gareth, and they two met together so hard that either smote other downe horse and all to the ground. So they were both brused and hurt, and there they lay till that the king with the hundred knights holpe sir Selises up, and sir Tristram and sir Palomides holpe up sir Gareth againe.

CHAP. CL.—*How sir Tristram and his fellowship justed, and of the noble feates that they did in that turnement.*

'NOW upon what partie,' said sir Tristram, 'is it best we bee with as to morrow?' 'Sir,' said sir Palomides, 'ye shal have mine advise to be against king Arthur as to morrow, for on his part will bee sir Launcelot and many good knights of his blood with him; and the more men of worship that they bee, the more worship shall we winne.' 'That is full knightly spoken,' said sir Tristram, 'and right so as yee counsaile me, so wil wee doe.' And on the morrow, when it was day, they were araied in greene trappours, shields, and speares, and La beale Isoud was in the same colour, and her three damosells. And so they led La beale Isoud where shee should stand and behould all the justs in a bay window; but alway she was

bewimpled¹, that no man might see her visage. And then these three knights rode straight unto the partie of the king of Scotland. When king Arthur had seene them doe all this, he asked sir Launcelot what were those knights and that queene. 'Sir,' said sir Launcelot, 'I can not shew you no certaintie, but if sir Tristram or sir Palomides be in this countrey, wit yee well of a certaine it beene they and La beale Isoud.' Then king Arthur called sir Kay, and said, 'Go and wit how many knights there be heere lacking of the round table.' So sir Kay went, and saw by the writing in the sieges that there lacked ten knights, and these be their names that be noted heere: sir Tristram, sir Palomides, sir Percivale, sir Gaheris, sir Elinogris, sir Mordred, sir Dinadan, sir La-cote-maile-tailé, and sir Pelleas. 'Well,' said king Arthur, 'some of these I dare undertake are here this day against us.' Then come there two bretheren, cosins unto sir Gawaine, hight sir Edward, and sir Sadocke, the which were two good knights of Orkeney. Then sir Edward encountred with the king of Scots, and smote him quite from his horse. And sir Sadock smote down the king of North-wales, and gave him a wonderous great fall, so that there was a great crie on king Arthurs part, and made sir Palomides passing wroth. And so sir Palomides met with sir Edward of Orkeney, and smote him so hard that both his horse and he fell to the ground; and then with the same spear sir Palomides smot down sir Sadock over his horse croup. This meane while there came into the place sir Tristram upon a black horse, and hee smote downe with one spear foure good knights of Orkeney, which were of the kin of sir Gawaine; and sir Gareth and sir Dinadan every each of them smote downe a good knight. 'O Jesu!' said king Arthur, 'yonder knight which rideth upon the blacke horse doeth mervailously well.' 'Abide you,' said sir Gawaine, 'that knight with the blacke horse began not yet.' Then sir Tristram made to be set on horsbacke againe those two knights which sir Edward and sir Sadocke had unhorsed at the beginning. And then sir Tristram drew out his sword, and rode into the thickest of the presse against them of Orkeney, and there he smote downe many knights; so that king Arthur and all other knights had great mervaille when they saw one knight doe so great deeds of armes. And sir Palomides failed not to doe his part, but did so mervailously well, that all men had wonder of him. But ever sir Tristram did so many deeds of armes that they of Orkeney waxed weary of him, and so withdrew them unto Lonazep.

¹ *Bewimpled*.—Wore a wimple, a sort of veil which covered the neck and sometimes the lower part of the face.

CHAP. CLI.—*How sir Tristram was unhorsed and smitten downe by sir Launcelot, and after that sir Tristram smote downe king Arthur.*

THEN was the crie of heraulds and all manner of common people, the greene knights had done right mervailously, and beaten all them of Orkeney. And there the heraulds numbred that sir Tristram, that sate upon the blacke horse, had smiten downe thirtie knights, and sir Palomides had smitten downe twenty knights; and the most part of those fiftie knights were of the house of king Arthur, and proved knights. 'So God me helpe,' said king Arthur unto sir Launcelot, 'this is a great shame to us to see foure knights to beate so many knights of mine, and therefore make you ready, and take with you sir Bleoberis and sir Ector, and I will be the fourth; and wee will have to doe with them.' And when they were ready and on horsbacke, 'Now choose,' said king Arthur unto sir Launcelot, 'with whom yee will encounter withall.' 'I will meete with the greene knight upon the blacke horse,' that was sir Tristram, 'and my cosin sir Bleoberis shall matche the greene knight upon the white horse,' that was sir Palomides, 'and my brother sir Ector shall match with the greene knight upon the white horse,' that was sir Gareth. 'Then must I,' said king Arthur, 'have to doe with the grene knight upon the grisild¹ horse,' and that was sir Dinadan. 'Now let every man take heede to his fellow,' said sir Launcelot. And so they trotted forth together: and there encountred sir Launcelot against sir Tristram, and sir Bleoberis against sir Palomides, and sir Ector de Maris against sir Gareth, and king Arthur against sir Dinadan; and every each of the greene knights was strooke so sore that hee fell downe to the earth. And then the noise turned a while how that the greene knights were slaine. When the king of Northgalis saw that sir Tristram had a fall, then hee remembered him how great deeds of armes sir Tristram had done; then hee made ready many knights, for the custome and crie was such, that what knight were smitten downe and might not be horsed againe should be prisoner unto the partie that had smitten him downe. So came the king of Northgalis, and hee rode straight unto sir Tristram, and alighted downe sodainly; and he tooke sir Tristram his horse, and said thus: 'Noble knight, I know thee not of what countrey thou art, but for the noble deeds that thou hast done this day, take thou my horse, and let me doe as well as I may; for, as Jesu helpe me, thou art better worthy to have my horse then my selfe.' 'Gramercy,' said sir Tristram, 'and if I may I shall quite it you; looke that yee goe not farre

¹ *Grisild*.—Grey.

from me, and, as I suppose, I shall winne you another horse.' And therewith sir Tristram mounted upon his horse; and there he met with king Arthur, and hee gave him such a buffet upon the helme with his sword that king Arthur had no power to keepe his sadell; and then sir Tristram gave the king of Northgalis king Arthurs horse. Then was there great presse about king Arthur for to horse him againe; but sir Palomides would not suffer king Arthur to bee horsed againe, but ever sir Palomides smote on the right hand and on the left hand mightely as a noble knight. And in the meane while sir Tristram rode through the thickest of the presse, and smote downe knights on the right hand and on the left hand, and so passed forth to his pavilions. And sir Tristram changed his horse, and disguised himselfe all in red, horse and harneis.

CHAP. CLII.—*How sir Tristram changed his harneis, and it was all red, and how hee demeaned him, and how sir Palomides slew sir Launcelots horse.*

AND when the queene La beale Isoud saw sir Tristram was unhorsed, and wist not where hee was, then shee began to weepe. But sir Tristram, when hee was ready, came dashing lightly into the field, and then La beale Isoud espied him. And sir Tristram smote downe five knights or ever that hee stinted. Then sir Launcelot espied him readyly that it was Tristram, and then he repented him that hee had smitten him downe; and so sir Launcelot went out of the presse for to rest him, and lightly he came againe. And so when sir Tristram came to the presse he put sir Palomides upon his horse, and sir Gareth and sir Dinadan, and then they began to doe mervailous deeds of armes; but sir Palomides nor his two fellows wist not who had holpen him on hors-backe againe. But ever sir Tristram was nigh them and succoured them, and they not him, because he was changed into red armour. And all this while sir Launcelot was away. And so it hapned sir Palomides looked up toward La beale Isoud where shee laie in the window, and therewith hee tooke such a rejoycing in himselfe that hee smote down, what with his speare and with his sword, all that ever hee met, for through the sight of her he was so enamoured that him seemed that if sir Tristram and sir Launcelot had bene both against him, they should have wonne no worship of him. Right so there came in the field sir Launcelot du Lake, and hee dressed him against sir Palomides with a great and mightie speare and a long, and thought to smite him downe. And as sir Launcelot should have stricken him, he smote his spear aside, and smote it atwo with his sword; and with his sword he

smot of his horse necke that sir Launcelot rode upon, and then sir Launcelot fell unto the ground. Then was the crie huge and great, 'See how sir Palomides the Sarasin hath smitten downe sir Launcelots horse!' Right so were there many knights wroth with sir Palomides, because he had done that deede; therfore many knights held there against that it was unknighly in a turnement to kil a horse wilfully, but if it had beene done in a plaine battaile, body for body¹.

CHAP. CLIII.—*What sir Launcelot said unto sir Palomides, and how that the prise of that day was given unto sir Palomides.*

AND when sir Ector de Maris saw sir Launcelot his brother have such a despite, and so set on foote, then hee ranne against sir Palomides, and smote him so hard, that he bare him quite from his horse. That saw sir Tristram, which was in red harneis, and he smote sir Ector de Maris quite and cleane from his horse. Then sir Launcelot dressed his shield upon his shoulder, and with his sword in his hand came straight upon sir Palomides right fiersly, and said, 'Wit thou well that thou hast done mee this day the greatest despite that ever any knight did to mee in turnement or in justs, and therefore take heede unto thy selfe.' 'Ah, mercy, noble knight,' said sir Palomides, 'and foregive me my unkind deede, for I have no power nor might to withstand you; and if ye put me from my worship as now, yee put me from the greatest worship that ever I had or ever shall have in my life dayes.' 'Wel,' said sir Launcelot, 'I see ye have done mervailously wel this day, and I understand a partie for whose love yee doe it. But beware that your love bee not discovered, for and sir Tristram may know it, ye will repent it. And sith my quarell is not heere, ye shall have this day the worship.' And therewith sir Launcelot suffered sir Palomides to depart. Then sir Launcelot, by great force and might, gat his owne horse maugre twentie knights. Then sir Launcelot smote downe with a speare sir Dinadan, and the king of Scotland, and the king of Wales, and the king of Northumberland, and the king of Listinoyse. So when sir Launcelot and his fellowes smote downe well fortie knights, then came the king of Ireland and the king of the Straight Marches to rescue sir Tristram and sir Palomides. Then began a great medle, and many knights there wer smitten downe on both parties, and alwayes sir Launcelot spared sir Tristram, and he spared him; and sir Palomides would not meddle with sir Launcelot. And so there was hurling here and there. And sir Palomides was ever in

¹ *Body for body.*—*Lyf for lyf*, Caxton.

the formost front ; and sir Tristram did so strongly and so well, that the king and the knights had great mervaille of him. And then the king let blow to lodging. And because that sir Palomides began first, never hee went nor rode out of the field to rest him, but ever he was doing mervailously well, both on foote and on horsbacke, and longest duringe. King Arthur and all the kings gave sir Palomides the honour and the degree as for that day. But when sir Palomides understood and wist that sir Tristram was in the red armour and upon the red horse, wit yee well that he was right glad, and so was sir Gareth and sir Dinadan, for they all wend that sir Tristram had beene taken prisoner.

CHAP. CLIV.—*How sir Dinadan provoked sir Tristram to doe well.*

‘AND thou, sir Tristram, farest all this day as though thou were asleepe, and therfore I call thee coward,’ said sir Dinadan. ‘Well, sir Dinadan,’ said sir Tristram, ‘I was never called coward or now of none earthly knight in all my life ; and I call my selfe never the more coward, though sir Launcelot gave me a fall ; for I outcept¹ him of all knights. And doubt ye not, sir Dinadan, and if sir Launcelot have a good quarell, he is over good for any knight that is now living ; and yet of his suffrance, largnesse, bountie, and curtesie, I call him knight peerles.’ And so sir Tristram was in manner wroth with sir Dinadan. But all this language sir Dinadan said because hee well knew that and sir Tristram were thoroughly wroth, sir Palomides should not get the prise on the morrow, and for this entent sir Dinadan said all this rayling and language against sir Tristram. ‘Truly,’ said sir Palomides, ‘as for sir Launcelot, of his noble knighthood, curtesie, prowess, and gentlenesse, I know not his peere. For this day,’ said sir Palomides, ‘I did full uncurteously to sir Launcelot and full unknighly, and full knightly and curteously hee did to me againe ; for and he had been as ungentle to me as I was to him, this day I had wonne no worship ; and therefore,’ said sir Palomides, ‘I shall be sir Launcelots knight while I live.’

CHAP. CLV.—*How king Arthur and sir Launcelot came to see the queene La beale Isoud, and how sir Palomides smote downe king Arthur.*

SO on the morrow sir Launcelot departed, and sir Tristram and La beale Isoud were ready with sir Palomides and sir Gareth, and so they rode all in greene full freshly beseene unto the forrest. And sir Tristram left sir Dinadan sleeping in his

¹ *Outcept*.—Except.

bed. And so as they rode, it hapned that king Arthur and sir Launcelot stood in a window, and they saw sir Tristram and La beale Isoud. 'Sir,' said sir Launcelot, 'yonder rideth the fairest lady of the world, except your queene dame Guenever.' 'Who is that?' said king Arthur. 'Sir,' said hee, 'it is queene Isoud, which, outcept my lady your queene, shee is peerelesse.' 'Take your horse,' said king Arthur, 'and aray you at all points as I will doe, and I promise you,' said the king, 'I will see her.' Then anon they were armed and horsed, and either tooke a speare and rode unto the forrest. Right so anon the king rode and came unto her, and graciously saluted her, and said, 'God save you, faire lady!' 'Sir,' said shee, 'yee are welcome.' Then the king beheld her, and liked her wonderous wel. With that came sir Palomides to king Arthur, and said, 'Thou uncurteous knight, what seekest thou heer? thou art uncurteous to come upon a lady thus sodeinly, therefore withdraw thee.' King Arthur tooke no heed of sir Palomides words, but alway he looked upon queene Isoud. Then sir Palomides was wroth, and therewith hee tooke a speare and came hurling upon king Arthur, and smote him downe with his speare. When sir Launcelot saw the despite of sir Palomides, he said to himselfe, 'I am loth to have to doe with yonder knight, and not for his owne sake, but for sir Tristrams sake. Notwithstanding, whether I live or die, needs must I revenge my lord, and so will I, whatsoever befall of me.' And therewith sir Launcelot cried to sir Palomides, 'Keepe thee from me.' And then sir Launcelot and sir Palomides encountred together with two speares full strongly; but sir Launcelot smote sir Palomides so hard, that he went quit out of the sadle, and had a great fall. When sir Tristram saw sir Palomides have such a fall, he said unto sir Launcelot, 'Sir knight, keepe thee, for I must needs just with thee.' 'As for to just with mee,' said sir Launcelot, 'I will not faile you, but I am full loth to have to doe with you, and I might choose. For I will that yee wit that I must revenge my speciall lord, for he is to me such a friend that I may not see him shamed.' Anon sir Tristram understood full well, by his person and by his knightly words, that it was sir Launcelot du Lake; and verily sir Tristram deemed that it had beene king Arthur, he that sir Palomides had smitten downe. And then sir Tristram put his speare from him, and put sir Palomides againe on horsbacke, and sir Launcelot put king Arthur againe on horsbacke, and so departed. 'So God mee helpe,' said sir Tristram unto Palomides, 'yee did not worshipfully when yee smote downe that knight so sodeinly as yee did. And wit yee well yee did your selfe great shame; for the knights came hether of their gentlenesse for to see a faire lady, and wit thou well it will turne to anger, for he that thou smote downe was the king, and that other was the good knight sir Launcelot.' 'I may

never beleewe, said sir Palomides, 'that king Arthur will ride so prively as doth a poor arraunt knight.' Then sir Tristram sent queene Isoud unto her lodging in the priorie, there to behold all the turnement.

CHAP. CLVI.—*How the second day sir Palomides forsooke sir Tristram, and went to the contrary part against him.*

THEN there was a cry made unto all knights, that when they heard a horne blow, that they should make justs as they did the first day. And sir Uwaine, the kings sonne Urein, and sir Lucan¹ the butler began the justs the second day. Then came there in sir Tristram de Liones, and then sir Tristram smote downe sir Uwaine and sir Lucan, and sir Palomides smote downe other two knights, and in like wise sir Gareth smote downe other two knights. Then said king Arthur unto sir Launcelot du Lake, 'See yonder three knights doe passing well, and namely the first that justed.' 'Sir,' said sir Launcelot, 'that knight beginneth not yet, but ye shal see him doe this day mervailous deedes of armes.' And then came into the place the dukes sonne of Orkeney. and then they began for to doe many deedes of armes. When sir Tristram saw him so begin, hee said unto sir Palomides, 'How feele ye your selfe? may you doe this day as yee did yesterday?' 'Nay,' said sir Palomides, 'I feele my selfe so weary, and so sore bruised of the deedes of yesterday, that I may not endure as I did yesterday.' 'That mee repenteth,' said sir Tristram, 'for I shall lack you this day.' 'Sir,' said sir Palomides, 'trust not to me, for I may not doe as I have done.' All these words said sir Palomides for to deceive sir Tristram. 'Sir,' said sir Tristram unto sir Gareth, 'then I must trust upon you; wherefore I beseech you be not farre from me to rescue me.' 'And if neede bee,' said sir Gareth, 'I shall not faile you in all that I may doe.' Then sir Palomides rode by himselfe, and in despite of sir Tristram hee put himselfe in the thickest presse among them of Orkeney, and there he did soe mervailous deedes of armes, that there might none stand him a strook. When sir Tristram saw sir Palomides do such deedes, he had great mervail of him, and said, 'He is weary of my company.' 'Sir,' said sir Gareth unto sir Tristram, 'remember yee not of the words that sir Dinadan said unto you yesterday, when he called you coward? For sooth, sir, he said it for none evill, and all that hee said was for your worship; and wonder yee not so upon sir Palomides, for he enforceth himselfe for to winne all the worship and honour from you.' Then sir Tristram rode into the thickest of all the presse, and then he did mervailously well, and did so great

¹ *Lucan.*—*Lucanere*, Caxton.

deeds of armes, that all the people there said that sir Tristram did double the deeds of armes that sir Palomides had done afore hand. And then the noyse went plaine from sir Palomides, and all the people cryed upon sir Tristram. And so hee beate all those of Orkeney afore him. 'How now?' said sir Launcelot unto king Arthur; 'I told you that this day there should a knight play his pagent'. 'So God mee helpe,' said king Arthur to sir Launcelot, 'yee say sooth, for I saw never a better knight, for he passeth farre sir Palomides.' 'Sir, wit ye well,' said sir Launcelot, 'it needes must be so of right, for it is himselfe that noble knight sir Tristram.' 'I may right well beleewe it,' said king Arthur. But when sir Palomides saw sir Tristram doe so marvailous wel, he wept passing sore for despite, for hee wist wel that he should winne no worship that day.

CHAP. CLVII.—*How sir Tristram departed out of the field and awaked sir Dinadan, and changed his aray all into blacke.*

THEN came there king Arthur, and the king of Northgalis, and sir Launcelot du Lake, and sir Bleoberis, sir Bors de Galis, and sir Ector de Maris. And so they beate the king of Wales and the king of Scots farre aback, and made them to avoide the felde. But sir Tristram and sir Gareth abode still in the felde, and sir Launcelot and his three kinsemen, by the commandement of sir Launcelot, ever forbare sir Tristram. Then said king Arthur, 'That is sir Palomides that endureth so well.' 'Nay,' said sir Launcelot, 'wit yee well it is the good knight sir Tristram de Lioness; and, sir, yee shall understand that sir Tristram weeneth in this day to beate us all out of the field; and as for me, I shall not beate him, beate him who so will.' As king Arthur and sir Launcelot thus spake, sir Tristram rode prively out of the presse, that none espied him but La beale Isoud and sir Palomides, for they two would not let their eyes goe from sir Tristram. And when sir Tristram came to his pavilions, he found sir Dinadan in his bed asleepe. 'Awake,' said sir Tristram, 'yee ought for to bee ashamed so to sleepe when knights have adoe in the field.' 'What!' said sir Dinadan, 'is your heart plucked up now? yesterday yee fared as though yee had dreamed.' So then sir Tristram was arayed all in black harneis. 'Oh Jesu!' said sir Dinadan, 'what ayleth you this day? me seemeth that yee bee wilder now then ye were yesterday.' So sir Tristram and sir Dinadan tooke their horses. All this espied sir Palomides, both their going and their comming, and so did La beale Isoud, for shee knew sir Tristram above all other.

¹ *Pagent*.—The *pageant* was properly the scaffold, or stage, and machinery of the play, but the term was not uncommonly applied to the play itself—it is here equivalent to 'act his part.'

CHAP. CLVIII.—*How sir Palomides changed his shield and his armour for to hurt sir Tristram, and what sir Launcelot did to sir Tristram.*

SO when sir Palomides saw that sir Tristram was disguised, then he thought to doe him a shame. So sir Palomides rode unto a knight that was sore wounded, which sat unto a faire well from the field. 'Sir knight,' said sir Palomides, 'I pray you that you will lend mee your armour and your shield, for mine is over well knowne in this field, and that hath done mee great damage, and yee shall have mine armour and my shield, that is as sure as yours.' 'I will well,' said the knight, 'that yee have mine armour and my shield, if they may doe you any availe.' So sir Palomides armed him hastily in that knights armour, and tooke his shield that shined as bright as any cristal or silver, and so hee came riding into the field. And then there was neither sir Tristram nor none of king Arthurs partie that knew sir Palomides; and right so as sir Palomides was coming into the field, sir Tristram smote downe three knights even in the sight of sir Palomides. And then sir Palomides rode against sir Tristram, and either met with other with great speares and brake them unto their hands, and then they dressed them together with swords full egerly; then sir Tristram mervailed much what knight hee was that did battaile with him so knightly. Full well knew La beale Isoud that it was sir Palomides that fought with sir Tristram, for shee espied all in her window where that shee stood as sir Palomides changed his harneis with the wounded knight, and then shee began to weepe for the despite of sir Palomides, that there she sowned. Then came in sir Launcelot with the knights of Orkeney. And when the other partie espied sir Launcelot, they cried, 'Returné, retourne, heere commeth sir Launcelot du Lake.' Then sir Launcelot rode betweene sir Tristram and sir Palomides, and sir Launcelot said unto sir Palomides, 'Sir knight, let me have the battaile, for yee have neede to rest you.' Sir Palomides knew sir Launcelot well, and so did sir Tristram, but because that sir Launcelot was a farre hardier knight then himselfe, therefore hee was glad, and there hee hoped that sir Launcelot should beate or shame sir Tristram, whereof sir Palomides was full well apaied¹. And sir Launcelot gave sir Tristram full many sad strookes, but sir Launcelot knew not that he was sir Tristram, but sir Tristram knew well that hee was sir Launcelot; and thus fought they long together, that La beale Isoud was well out of her mind for sorrow. Then sir Dinadan told sir Gareth how that knight in the blacke harneis was sir Tristram, 'and this is sir Launcelot that fighteth with him, which needes

¹ *Apaied.*—Satisfied; glad.

must have the better of him ; for sir Tristram hath had to much travaile this day.' 'Then let us smite him downe,' said sir Gareth. 'So it is better that wee doe,' said sir Dinadan, 'rather then sir Tristram should bee shamed. For yonder hoveth the strong knight with the silver shield for to fall upon sir Tristram if neede bee.' Then forthwithall sir Gareth rashed upon sir Launcelot and gave him a great strooke upon his helme so hard that hee was all stonied. And then came sir Dinadan with a great speare, and hee smote sir Launcelot such a buffet that horse and all fell to the ground. And then came sir Palomides, that was disguised, and smote downe sir Dinadan from his horse. Then sir Launcelot assayed sir Dinadan passing sore, and sir Dinadan defended him mightily. Then came sir Palomides fresh upon sir Tristram, and sir Tristram hurled unto sir Palomides and gave him a great buffet, and pulled him downe underneath him, and so fell sir Tristram with him, and sir Tristram lept up lightly, and left sir Palomides, and went betweene sir Launcelot and sir Dinadan, and then they began to doe battaile together. Right so sir Dinadan gat sir Tristram's horse, and said on high, so that sir Launcelot might heare it, 'My lord sir Tristram, take your horse.' And when sir Launcelot heard him name sir Tristram : 'Oh, Jesu,' said sir Launcelot, 'what have I done ? I am dishonoured. Ah ! my lord sir Tristram, why were yee disguised ? ye have put your selfe in great perrill this day. But I pray you, noble knight, pardon me, for, and I had knowne you, wee had not done this battaile.' 'Sir,' said sir Tristram, 'this is not the first kindnesse ye have shewed me.' And so they were both horsed againe. Then all the people on the one side gave sir Launcelot the honour and the degree. But sir Launcelot said nay thereto, 'For I am not worthy to have this honour, for sir Tristram hath beene longer in the field then I, and hee hath smitten downe many moe knights this day then I have done. And therefore I will give sir Tristram my voice and my name, and so I praeie you all, my lords and fellowes, so to doe.' And then was there the hole voice of dukes and earles, barons and knights, that sir Tristram this day is proved the best knight.

CHAP. CLIX.—*How sir Tristram departed with La beale Isoud, and how sir Palomides followed and excused him.*

SO when the turneiment was done, sir Tristram, sir Gareth, and sir Dinadan rode with La beale Isoud unto their pavilions, and alway sir Palomides rode with them in their company disguised as hee was. But when sir Tristram had espied him, that hee was the same knight with the shield of silver the which held him so hot that same day : 'Sir knight,'

said sir Tristram, 'wilt yee well that heere is none of us that hath any neede of your fellowship, and therefore I pray you depart from us.' Sir Palomides answered againe, as though he had not knowen sir Tristram, 'Wit yee well, sir knight, that from this fellowship will I not depart, for one of the best knights of the world commanded me to bee in this company, and till he discharge me of my service I will not be discharged.' By that sir Tristram knew that it was sir Palomides. 'Sir Palomides,' said sir Tristram, 'are yee such a knight? yee have beene named wrong, for yee have beene called a gentle knight, and as this day yee have shewed mee great ungentlenesse, for yee had almost brought me unto my death. But as for you, I suppose I should have done well enough; but sir Lancelot with you was overmuch for mee, for I know no knight living, but sir Launcelot is over good for him, and hee will doe his uttermost.' 'Alas!' said sir Palomides, 'are ye my lord sir Tristram? By my knighthood, untill now I knew you not, for I wend that yee had beene the king of Ireland, for I wote well that yee beare his armes.' 'His armes I bare,' said sir Tristram, 'and that will I stand by, for I wan them once in a field of a full noble knight, whose name was sir Marhaus; but hee died through false leeches, and yet never hee yelded him to me.' 'Sir,' said sir Palomides, 'I wend yee had beene turned upon sir Launcelots partie, and that caused me to turne.' 'Ye say well,' said sir Tristram, 'and so I take you, and I forgive it you.' So then they rode unto their pavilions, and, when they were alighted, they unarmed them, and washed their faces and hands, and so set them at their table, and went to meate; and, when La beale Isoud saw sir Palomides, shee changed her colour, and for wrath she might not speake. Anon sir Tristram espied her countenance, and said, 'Madame, for what cause make yee us such cheere? wee have beene sore travailed this day.' 'My deare lord,' said La beale Isoud, 'for God's sake be yee not displeased with mee, for I may none otherwise doe, for I saw this day how yee were betraied and nigh brought unto your death. Truly, sir, I saw every deale, how and in what wise, and therefore, sir, how should I suffer in your presence such a felon and traitour as sir Palomides is, for I saw him with mine eye how hee beheld you when yee went out of the field; for alway hee hoved still upon his horse till hee saw you come in againeward. And then forthwith I saw him ride to the hurt knight, and changed harneys with him, and then straight I saw him how hee rode into the field. And anon as hee had found you, hee encountred with you, and thus wilfully sir Palomides did battaile with you, and as for him, sir, I was not greatly afeard, but I dread sir Launcelot that knew you not.' 'Madame,' said sir Palomides, 'yee may say what ye will, I may not contrary you, but by my knighthood I knew not sir Tristram.'

'Sir Palomides,' said sir Tristram, 'I will hold you excused, but well I wote yee spared me but little, but all is pardoned on my part.' Then La beale Isoud held downe her head, and said no more.

CHAP. CLX.—*How king Arthur and sir Launcelot came into their pavilions as they sale at supper, and of sir Palomides.*

AND therewithall two knights armed came into their pavilions, and there they alighted both, and came in armed at all peeces. 'Faire knight,' said Sir Tristram, 'ye are too blame to come thus armed at all peeces upon us while wee are at our meat; if yee would anything when we were in the field, yee might have eased your hearts.' 'Not so,' said the one of those knights, 'wee come not for that entent; but wit yee well, sir Tristram, we be come hither as your friends; and I am come here, sir, to see you, and this knight is come for to see La beale Isoud.' 'Then,' said sir Tristram, 'I require you doe off your helmes that I may see you.' 'That will we doe at your desire,' said the knights. And when their helmes were off, sir Tristram said unto La beale Isoud, 'Madame, arise, for heere is my lord king Arthur.' Then the king and the queene kissed, and sir Launcelot and sir Tristram embraced either other in armes, and at the request of La beale Isoud king Arthur and sir Lancelot were unarmed, and then was there mery talking. 'Madame,' said king Arthur, 'it is many a day sith that I have desired to see you; for yee have beene praised for so faire, and now I dare say yee are the fairest that ever I saw, and sir Tristram is as faire and as good a knight as any that I doe know, therefore me seemeth ye are right well beset together.' 'Sir, God thanke you,' said sir Tristram and La beale Isoud, 'of your great goodnesse and largenesse, for yee are pearles'.¹ And thus they talked of divers things, and of all the whole justing. 'What knight was that,' said king Arthur, 'that held you so short? he with the shield of silver.' 'Sir,' said sir Tristram, 'heere hee sitteth at this boord.' 'What,' said king Arthur, 'was it sir Palomides?' 'Wit yee well it was hee,' said La beale Isoud. 'So God me helpe,' said king Arthur, 'that was unknighly done of you of so good a knight, for I heard much people call you a courteous knight.' 'Sir,' said sir Palomides, 'I knew not sir Tristram, because hee was so disguised.' 'So God me helpe,' said sir Launcelot, 'it may well be, for I knew not sir Tristram.' 'But I marvaile why yee turned on our partie.' So they left off, and talked of other maters, and in the evening king Arthur and sir Launcelot departed unto their lodging. So on the morrow sir Tristram, sir Gareth, and sir Dinadan arose early, and then went unto sir Palomides chamber, and there

¹ *Pearles.*—Peerless.

they found him fast on sleepe, for hee had all night watched, and it was seene upon his cheekes that hee had wept full sore. 'Say nothing,' said sir Tristram, 'for I am sure hee hath taken anger and sorrow for the rebuke that I gave him and La beale Isoud.'

CHAP. CLXI.—*How sir Tristram and sir Palomides did the next day, and how king Arthur was unhorsed.*

AND then sir Tristram let call sir Palomides, and bad him make him ready, for it was time to goe unto the field. When they were ready, they were armed and clothed all in red, both La beale Isoud and they all, and so they led her passing freshly through the field into the priory where was her standing. And then they heard three blasts blow, and every king and knight dressed him unto the field. And the first that was ready to just was sir Palomides, and sir Kainus le Strange, a knight of the round table; and sir Palomides smote downe sir Kainus and another knight; and after he did wonderous well. 'Loe,' said king Arthur, 'yonder sir Palomides beginneth to play his pagent; so God me helpe, hee is a passing good knight.' And right as they stood thus talking, in came sir Tristram as thunder, and hee encountred with sir Kaye the seneshall, and there smote him downe quite from his horse, and three knights moe, and then hee drew out his sword and did mervailously. 'How now?' said sir Launcelot unto king Arthur; 'yonder rideth a knight that plaieth his pagents.' 'So God me helpe,' said king Arthur to sir Launcelot, 'yee shall see this day that yonder two knights shall doe heere many wonders.' 'Sir,' said sir Launcelot, 'the one knight waiteth upon the other, and enforceth himselfe through envy to passe the noble knight sir Tristram; and all that the noble sir Tristram doth is through cleane knighthood.' And then sir Gareth and sir Dinadan did wonderous deeds of armes as two noble knights, so that king Arthur spake of them great honour; the kings and knights of sir Tristrams side did passing well, and held them truly together. Then king Arthur and sir Launcelot tooke their horses, and dressed them, and gate them into the thickest of the presse, and there sir Tristram unknowing smote down king Arthur; and then sir Lancelot would have rescued him, but ther were so many upon him that they pulled him downe from his horse. And then the king of Ireland and the king of Scotland did there paine to take king Arthur and sir Launcelot prisoners. When sir Launcelot heard them say so, hee fared so that no knight durst come nigh him. Then came sir Ector de Maris, and hee gave sir Palomides such a dash with his sword that hee stouped downe upon his sadle bow, and forth-

withal sir Ector pulled downe sir Palomides under his feet, and then sir Ector gat sir Lancelot an horse, and bad him mount upon him; but sir Palomides stept before him, and gate the horse by the bridell and lept into the sadell. 'So God me helpe,' said sir Launcelot, 'yee are better worthy to have that horse then I.' Then sir Ector brought sir Launcelot another horse. Then sir Launcelot, with king Arthur and with a few of his knights of sir Launcelots kinn, did mervailous deeds of armes; for that time sir Launcelot smote downe and pulled downe thirtie knights. Notwithstanding, the other partie held them so fast together that king Arthur and his knights were overmatched. And when sir Tristram saw what labour king Arthur and his knights did, and most specially the noble deeds that sir Launcelot did with his owne hands, hee mervailed greatly thereof.

CHAP. CLXII.—*How sir Tristram turned to king Arthurs side, and how sir Palomides would not.*

THEN sir Tristram called unto him sir Palomides, sir Gareth, and sir Dinadan, and said thus unto them: 'My faire fellows, wit yee well that I will turne unto king Arthurs partie, for I saw never so few men doe so well; and it will be shame to us knights that be of the round table to see our lord king Arthur, and that noble knight sir Launcelot, to bee dishonoured.' 'It will be well done,' said sir Gareth and sir Dinadan. 'Doe your best,' said sir Palomides, 'for I will not change my part that I come in withall.' 'That is for my sake,' said sir Tristram; 'God speed you well in your journey.' And so departed sir Palomides from them. Then sir Tristram, sir Gareth, and sir Dinadan turned to sir Launcelot. And then sir Launcelot smote downe the king of Ireland quite from his horse, and the king of Scotland and the king of Wales. And then king Arthur ranne unto sir Palomides, and smote him quite from his horse; and then sir Tristram beare downe all that he met; sir Gareth and sir Dinadan did there as noble knights. Then all the parties began to flee. 'Alas!' said sir Palomides, 'that ever I should see this day, for now have I lost all the worship that I wanne.' And then sir Palomides went his way wailing, and so withdrew him till hee came to a well, and there he put his horse from him and did off his armour. Then many knights gave the price unto sir Tristram, and there were many that gave the price unto sir Launcelot. 'Faire lords,' said sir Tristram, 'I thanke you of the honor that ye would give me, but I pray you hartely that ye wil give your voice unto sir Launcelot, for by my faith, I will give sir Launcelot my voice.' But sir Launcelot would not have it, and so the prise was given

betweene them both. Then every man rode unto his lodging ; and sir Bleoberis and sir Ector de Maris rode with sir Tristram and queene La beale Isoud unto their pavilions. Then as sir Palomides was at the well wailing and weeping, there came to him the king of Wales and the king of Scotland, and when they saw sir Palomides in that rage, 'Alas !' said they, 'that so noble a man as ye be should be in this araie.' And then those two kings gat sir Palomides horse againe, and made him to arme him and mount upon his horse, and so hee rode with them making great dole. So when sir Palomides came nigh the pavilions there as sir Tristram and La beale Isoud were, then sir Palomides praied the two kings to abide there a while till hee had spoken with sir Tristram. And when hee came unto the gate of the pavilions, there sir Palomides said all on high, 'Where art thou, sir Tristram de Lyones?' 'What, sir Palomides !' said sir Tristram, 'will yee not come in heere among us?' 'Fie on thee, traitour !' said sir Palomides, 'thou shalt die for this daies deed.' Then on the morrow sir Tristram, sir Bleoberis, and sir Ector, sir Gareth, and sir Dinadan brought La beale Isoud unto Joyous-gard, and there rested them seven dayes, and made all the mirths and disports that they could devise. And king Arthur and his knights drew unto Camelot.

CHAP. CLXIII.—*How sir Bleoberis and sir Ector reported to queene Guenever the beauty of La beale Isoud.*

AND so, at the seven nights end, sir Bleoberis and sir Ector departed from sir Tristram and from the queene La beale Isoud, and these two knights had great gifts ; and sir Gareth and sir Dinadan abode with sir Tristram. And when sir Bleoberis and sir Ector were come there as queene Guenever was lodged in a castle by the sea-side she asked the two knights from whence they came. They said that they came from sir Tristram and from La beale Isoud. 'How doth sir Tristram,' said queene Guenever, 'and La beale Isoud?' 'Truly,' said those two knights, 'hee doth as a noble knight should doe ; and as for the queene La beale Isoud, shee is pearelesse of all ladies, for to speake of her beautie, bountie, and mirth, and of her goodnesse, we saw never her match as far as we have riden and gone.' 'Oh, mercy, Jesu !' said queene Guenever, 'so saith all the people that hath seene her and spoken with her ; I would to God that I had part of her conditions, and it misfortuned mee of my sicknesse while that turnement endured ; and, as I suppose, I shal never see in all my life such an assemble of knights and ladies as ye had there ; but what knights did best?' 'So God me helpe,' said the knights, 'sir Launcelot and sir Tristram had least dishonour. And wit yee well sir Palomides did passing

well and mightily, but it seemeth that sir Palomides is passing envious.' 'Then shall hee never win worshippe,' said queene Guenever, 'for and it happen an envious man to win worship, he shall bee dishonoured twice therefore.'

CHAP. CLXIV.—*How sir Palomides complained by a well, and how sir Epinogris came and found him, and of both their sorrowes.*

NOW leave we off this matter, and speake we of sir Palomides, that rode and lodged him with the two kings; and faine they would have had sir Palomides to have abiden with them, but in no wise hee would not abide, and so hee departed and rode as adventures would guide him, till it was nigh noone. And then in a forrest by a well sir Palomides saw where lay a wounded knight, which made the greatest dole that ever he heard man make, for ever hee wept and sighed as though hee would die. Then sir Palomides rode neere him, and saluted him mildly, and said, 'Faire knight, why waile you so? let mee lye downe and waile with you, for doubt ye not I am much more heavier then ye are; and therefore let us complaine either to other.' 'First,' said the wounded knight, 'I require you to tell me your name, for and ye be none of the noble knights of the round table, ye shall never know my name, whatsoever come of me.' 'Faire knight,' said sir Palomides, 'wit yee well that I am sir Palomides, sonne and heire unto sir Astlabor, and sir Safire and sir Segwarides are my bretheren.' 'Oh, noble knight,' said that knight, 'well is me that I have met with you, and wit ye wel that my name is sir Epinogris, the kings sonne of Northumberland. Now sit ye downe,' said sir Epinogris, 'and let us either complaine unto other.' Then sir Palomides began his complaint. 'Now shall I tell you,' said sir Palomides, 'what woe I endure. I love the fairest queene and lady that ever beare life, and wit yee well her name is La beale Isoud, king Markes wife of Cornewaile.' 'That is great folly,' said sir Epinogris, 'for to love queene Isoud, for one of the best knights in the world loveth her, that is sir Tristram de Liones.' 'That is truth,' said sir Palomides, 'for none knoweth that better then I doe, for I have beene in sir Tristrams fellowship this moneth, and La beale Isoud together.' 'Well,' said sir Epinogris, 'sith that ye loved La beale Isoud, loved she you ever againe by any thing that ye could thinke or wit?' 'Nay, by my knighthood,' said sir Palomides, 'I never espied that ever shee loved mee more then all the world; but the last day she gave me the foulest rebuke that ever I had, the which shall never goe from my heart, and yet I well deserved that rebuke, for I had not done knightly, and therefore I have lost the love of her and of sir Tristram for ever.'

CHAP. CLXV.—*How sir Palomides brought unto sir Epinogris his lady, and how sir Palomides and sir Safire were assailed.*

'NAY, nay,' said sir Epinogris, 'your sorrow is but japes¹ to my sorrow, for I rejoyced my lady and wan her with my hands, and lost her againe; alas, the day! Thus first I wan her; my lady was an earles daughter; and as this earle and two of his knights came from the turnement of Lonazep, and for her sake I set upon this earle and upon his two knights; my lady then being present, and so by fortune there I slew the earle and one of the knights, and the other knight fled; and on the morrow as my lady and I tooke our rest by this well side, there came here unto me an arraunt knight, his name was sir Helior le Pruse; and hee chalenged mee for to fight for my lady. And then we went to battaile, first on horseback and then on foote; but at the last sir Helior wounded mee so sore that he left me for dead, and so hee tooke my lady with him.' Then sir Palomides made sir Epinogris to take his horse, and so they rode unto an hermitage, and there sir Epinogris tooke his rest. And in the meanwhile sir Palomides walked privily for to rest him underneath the leaves; and there beside hee saw a knight come riding with a shield that hee had seene sir Ector de Maris beare afore hand, and there came after him about ten knights, and so these ten knights hoved under the leaves for heate. And anon after there came a knight with a greene shield and therein a white lyon, leading a lady upon a palfrey. Then the knight with sir Ector's shield rode fiercely after the other knight, and bad him defend his lady, and they fought together mightily more then an houre: but at the last the knight with sir Ectors shield smote downe that knight with the greene shield, which was sir Helior, and unlaced his helme for to have stricken off his head; and then he cried mercy, and prayed him to save his life. Then sir Palomides went straight unto that lady, and tooke her by the hand, and asked her whether she knew one that hight sir Epinogris. 'Alas!' said she, 'that ever he knew me, or I him, for his life that hee hath lost greeveth me most of all.' 'Not so, lady,' said sir Palomides, 'come on with me, for here is sir Epinogris in this hermitage.' 'Whether wilt thou with that lady?' said the knight with sir Ectors shield. 'I will doe with her what mee list,' said sir Palomides. And so they went to battaile on foote, and thus they fought still more then an houre. Then sir Palomides had marvaile what knight he might be that was so strong and so wel breathed, and thus said sir Palomides, 'Knight, I require thee tell me thy name.' 'Truly,' said that knight, 'my name is

¹ *Japes.*—*Jesta.*

sir Safire, sonne unto king Astlabor.' 'Now wit you well my name is sir Palomides.' Then sir Safire kneeled downe upon both his knees, and prayed him of mercie; and then they unlaced their helmes, and either kissed other weeping.

CHAP. CLXVI.—*How sir Palomides and sir Safire conducted sir Epinogris to his castle, and of other adventures.*

AND then sir Palomides tooke the lady by the hand and brought her unto sir Epinogris, and there was great joy betweene them, for either sowned for joy when they were met. And so was sir Epinogris horsed, and his lady behind him, upon a soft ambling horse. And then they rode straight unto his castle, where they had good cheere. So on the morrow sir Palomides and sir Safire departed, and rode as fortune would lead them, and so they rode all that day untill after noone; and at the last they heard a great weeping and a great noise down in a manor. And so they rode forth till they came to a faire gate of a manor, and ther sat an old man saying his prayers on beades. Then sir Palomides and sir Safire alighted downe, and left their horses and went within the gates, and there they saw full goodly men weeping.

'Faure fellowes,' said sir Palomides, 'wherefore weepe ye and make this sorrow?' And one of the knights of the castle beheld sir Palomides and knew him, and then he went to his fellowes and said, 'Faure fellowes, wit ye well all, we have in this castle the same knight that slew our lord at Lonazep, for I know him well, it is sir Palomides.' Then they went to harneis all that might beare harneis, some on horsebacke and some on foote, to the number of threescore. And when they were ready, they came freshly upon sir Palomides and upon sir Safire, with a great noyse, and said thus, 'Keepe thee, sir Palomides, for thou hast slaine our lord, and therefore defend thee.' Then sir Palomides and sir Safire, the one set his backe unto other, and thus they fought with twentie knights and fortie gentlemen and yeomen nigh two houres, but at the last, though they were loth, sir Palomides and sir Safire were taken and put in a strong prison. And within three days twelve knights passed upon them, and they found sir Palomides guilty and sir Safire not guilty of their lords death. So sir Safire departed from his brother with the greatest dolour and sorrow that ever made knight. And on the morrow they of the castle ordained twelve knights to ride with sir Palomides unto the father of the same knight that sir Palomides slew, and so they bound his leggs under an old steeds belly. And then they rode unto a castle by the sea side, which castle hight Pelownes, and there sir Palomides should have justice done on him; thus was their

ordenance. And so they rode fast by the castle of Joyous-gard, and as they passed by that castle there came rideing by them one that knew sir Palomides. And when that knight saw sir Palomides bound upon a crooked courser, hee asked him for what cause hee was so led. 'Ah! my faire fellow and knight,' said sir Palomides, 'I ride toward my death for sleying of a knight at the turnement of Lonazep, and if I had not departed from my lord sir Tristram, as I ought not to have done, now might I have beene sure to have had my life saved. But I pray you, sir knight, recommend mee unto my lord sir Tristram and unto my lady queene La beale Isoud, and say to them, if I ever trespassed unto them, I aske them forgiveness; and also I beseech you recommend mee unto my lord king Arthur, and unto all the fellowship of the round table unto my power.' Then that knight wept for pittie of sir Palomides, and therewith hee rode to Joyous-gard as fast as his horse might runne. And lightly that knight descended downe from his horse, and went unto sir Tristram, and there hee told him all as yee have heard before.

CHAP. CLXVII.—*How sir Tristram made him ready for to rescew sir Palomides, but sir Launcelot rescewed him or he came.*

AS sir Tristram heard how sir Palomides went to his death, he was heavie to heare of it, and hee tooke his horse and two squires with him, and rode a great pace unto the castle Pelownes, where sir Palomides was judged to death. And these twelve knights which led sir Palomides passed by a well where as sir Launcelot was, which was alighted there, and had tied his horse unto a tree. And when hee saw these knights come, hee suffered them to passe by him; and then hee was ware how sir Palomides was bound, and led shamefully to death. 'For soth,' said sir Launcelot, 'it were shame to mee to suffer this noble knight to die, and I might helpe him, therefore I will helpe him whatsoever come of it, else I shall die for sir Palomides sake.' And then sir Launcelot mounted upon his horse, and gat his speare in his hand, and rode after the twelve knights that led sir Palomides. 'Faire knights,' said sir Launcelot, 'whether lead yee that knight? it beseemeth him full ill to ride bound.' Then these twelve knights sodeinly turned their horses, and said to sir Launcelot, 'Sir knight, we counsell thee not to medle with this knight, for hee hath deserved death, and unto the death hee is judged.' 'That mee repenteth,' said sir Launcelot, 'that I may not borrow him with fairenesse, for hee is over good a knight to die such a shamefull death; and therefore, faire knights,' said sir Launcelot, 'keepe yourselves as well as ye can, for I will rescew that knight, or else die for him.'

And then sir Launcelot smote foure knights downe horse and man; and then his speare breake. And therewithall sir Launcelot drew out his sword, and within a while he left none of those knights but that they were laid unto the earth, and the most part of them were sore wounded. And then sir Launcelot tooke the best horse that he found, and loosed sir Palomides of his bands, and set him upon that horse, and so they returned againe unto Joyous-gard. Then was sir Palomides ware of sir Tristram, how he came riding. And when sir Launcelot saw him, he knew him right well, but sir Tristram knew not him, because that sir Launcelot had upon his shoulder a golden shield. So sir Launcelot made him ready to just with sir Tristram, because that sir Tristram should not wend that he were sir Launcelot. Then sir Palomides cried out aloud unto sir Tristram, 'O my lord, I require you just not with this knight, for hee hath saved me from the death.' When sir Tristram heard him say so, hee came a soft trotting pace toward them. And then sir Palomides said, 'My lord sir Tristram, much am I beholden unto you, that of your great goodnesse that yee would proffer your noble body to rescew me undeserved, for I have greatly offended you. Notwithstanding, here met we with this noble knight, that worshipfully and manly rescewed me from twelve knights, and smote them all downe and wounded them sore.'

CHAP. CLXVIII.—*How sir Tristram and sir Launcelot, with sir Palomides, came to Joyous-garde, and of sir Palomides, and of sir Tristram.*

'FAIRE knight,' said sir Tristram unto sir Launcelot du Lake, 'of whence be ye?' 'I am knight arraunt,' said sir Launcelot, 'that rideth to seeke adventures.' 'What is your name?' said sir Tristram. 'Sir,' said sir Launcelot, 'as at this time I will not tell you.' Then sir Launcelot said unto sir Tristram and unto sir Palomides, 'Now either of you are met together, I will depart from you.' 'Not so,' said sir Tristram; 'I pray you of your knighthood to ride with me unto my castle.' And when they were come within Joyous-gard, they alighted, and their horses were led into a stable, and then they unarmed them. And when sir Launcelot had put off his helme, sir Tristram and sir Palomides knew him. Then sir Tristram tooke sir Launcelot in his armes, and in likewise did La beale Isoud; and sir Palomides kneeled downe upon his knees and thanked sir Launcelot. When sir Lancelot saw sir Palomides kneele, he lightly tooke him up, and said, 'Wit thou well, sir Palomides, I and any knight in this land of worship ought of very right to succour and rescew so noble a knight as yee are proved and renowned throughout all this realme, endlong and

overthwart¹. Then sir Launcelot within three or foure dayes departed, and with him rode sir Ector de Maris. And sir Dinadan and sir Palomides were left there with sir Tristram a two monethes and more. But ever sir Palomides faded and mourned, that all men had great mervaile wherefore he faded so away. So upon a day in the dawning sir Palomides went to the forrest by himselfe alone, and there he found a well, and then he looked into the well, and in the water he saw his visage, how hee was disturbed and faded, and nothing like as he was wont to bee.

'What may this mean?' said sir Palomides; and thus he said to himselfe: 'A! Palomides, Palomides! why art thou diffaded², thou that was wont to be called one of the fairest knights of the world? now I will no more leade this life, for I love that the which I may never get nor recover.' And therewith hee laide him downe by the well, and then he began to make a rime of La beale Isoud. And so as sir Tristram rode into that forrest up and downe, hee heard one sing mervailously loud, and that was sir Palomides that lay by the well. And then sir Tristram rode softly thither, for he deemed that there was some knight arraunt that was at the well. And when sir Tristram came nigh him, hee descended downe from his horse, and tied his horse fast unto a tree, and anon hee was ware where as lay sir Palomides by a well, and sung loud and merrily³, and ever the complaints were of the queene La beale Isoud, the which were marvailously well made, and ful and dolefully and pitiously sad. But then at the last, when sir Tristram had heard all sir Palomides complaints, he was wroth out of measure; and so he went unto sir Palomides a soft pace and said: 'Sir Palomides, I have hard al thy complaints and al thy treason that thou hast owed mee so long, and wit thou well therefore thou shalt die.' 'Sir,' said sir Palomides, 'thus I will aquite me: as for queene La beale Isoud, ye shall wit that I love her above all other ladies of the world; and well I wot it shall befall me for her loye, as it befell to the noble knight sir Kay Hedious⁴, that died for the love of La beale Isoud. And yet I had never reward nor bounty of her dayes of my life, and yet have I been her knight guardonlesse⁵, and therefore, sir Tristram, for any death I dread not, for I had as rather die as live; and if I were armed as thou art, I should lightly doe battaile with thee.'

¹ *Endlong and overthwart*.—i.e. in length and breadth, far and wide.

² *Diffaded*.—Dwindled, or faded away. The edition of 1634 has substituted *defamed*, which destroys the sense.

³ *Merrily*.—Pleasantly, which was the primitive meaning of the word.

⁴ *Sir Kay Hedious*. See a former part of the present book, p. 250.

⁵ *Guardonlesse*.—Without guerdon, or reward.

CHAP. CLXIX.—*How there was a day set betweene sir Tristram and sir Palomides for to fight, and how sir Tristram was hurt.*

‘**T**HEN,’ said sir Tristram, ‘I will fight with you unto the uttermost.’ ‘I graunt,’ said sir Palomides, ‘for in a better quarell keepe I never to fight, for and I die of your hands, of a better knights hands may I not be slaine.’ ‘Then set yee a day of battaile,’ said sir Tristram. ‘This day fiteene dayes,’ said sir Palomides, ‘will I meete with you hereby in the meadow under Joyous-gard.’ Right so departed sir Tristram and sir Palomides; and so sir Palomides tooke his horse and his harneis, and rode unto king Arthurs court, and there hee gat him foure knights and three sergeants of armes; and so hee returned againe toward Joyous-gard. And in the meane while sir Tristram chaced and hunted at all manner of ventry¹; and about a three dayes afore that the battaile should be, as sir Tristram chaced an hart, ther was an archer shot at the hart, and by misfortune he smote sir Tristram in the thickest of the thigh and wounded him right sore, and the arrow slew sir Tristrams horse. And then hee tooke another horse, and rode unto Joyous-gard with full great heavinesse. Wherefore there was neither man nor woman that might cheere him with any thing that they could make unto him, neither queene La beale Isoud; for ever sir Tristram deemed that Palomides had smitten him so because hee should not be able to doe battaile with him at the day set; but no knight would beleve that sir Palomides would hurt sir Tristram.

CHAP. CLXX.—*How that sir Palomides kept his day for to have foughten, but sir Tristram might not come, and of other matters.*

THEN when the fifteenth day was come, sir Palomides came to the well with foure knights with him of king Arthurs court, and three sergeants of armes. So sir Palomides came into the field, and there he abode nigh two houres, and then he sent a squire unto sir Tristram and desired him to come into the field for to hold his promise. When the squire was come to Joyous-gard, and that sir Tristram hard of his comming, hee commanded that the squire should come to his presence there as hee lay in his bed. ‘My lord sir Tristram,’ said sir Palomides squire, ‘wit ye well my lord sir Palomides abideth you in the field, and he would wit whether yee will doe battaile or not.’ ‘Ah! my faire brother,’ said sir Tristram, ‘wit thou well that I am right heavie for these tidings, therefore tell sir Palo-

¹ Ventry.—Game.

mides, and I were well at ease I would not lye here, nor hee should have no neede for to send for mee and I might either ride or goe; and because thou shalt say that I am no lyer;' (sir Tristram shewed him his thigh that the wound was sixe enches deepe;) 'and now thou hast seene my hurt, tell thy lord that this is no fained matter, and tell him that I had rather then all the gold of king Arthur that I were whole and sound.' And then departed sir Palomides wher as fortune would lead him. And within a moneth sir Tristram was whole of his hurt, and then he tooke his armour, and rode from countrey to countrey, and all the strange adventures he achieved wheresoever he rode. And al waies hee enquired after sir Palomides, but of all that quarter of sommer sir Tristram could never meete with him; but thus as sir Tristram sought and enquired hee achieved many great battailes, wherethrough all the noyse fell to sir Tristram, and it seased of sir Launcelot. And therefore sir Launcelots bretheren and his kinsmen would have slaine sir Tristram, because of his great fame. But when sir Launcelot wist how his kinsmen were set, he said to them openly: 'Wit ye well that, and you waite upon my lord sir Tristram with any hurt, shame, or vilany, as I am true knight, I shall slay the best of you with mine owne hands. Fie for shame! would ye for his noble deeds awaite upon him to slay him?' Of this the noyse and fame sprang into Cornewaile, and among them of Liones, whereof they were passing glad and made great joy. And then they of Lyones sent letters unto sir Tristram of commendation, and many great gifts to maintaine his estate. And ever now and then sir Tristram resorted unto Joyous-gard, where as La beale Isoud was, that loved him as her selfe.

BOOK III.

CHAP. I.—*How sir Launcelot rode on his adventures, and how he holpe a dolorous lady from paine, and how he fought with a dragon.*

NOW leave wee off sir Tristram de Lioncs, and speake we of sir Launcelot du Lake, and sir Galahad, sir Launcelots sonne. Afore the time that sir Galahad¹ was born, there came in an hermit unto king Arthur on Whitsunday, as the knights sat at the round table; and when the hermit saw the siege perilous, hee asked the king why that siege was voide. 'Nay,' said king Arthur, 'we wot not who he is that shall sit therein.' 'Then wot I,' said the hermit, 'for he that shall sit in that siege is yet unborne, and hee shall win the sancgreall.' When the hermit had made this mention, he departed from the court of king Arthur. And then after the feast sir Launcelot rode on his adventures, till upon a time by adventure hee passed over the bridge of Corbin², and there he saw the fairest tower that ever he saw, and thereunder was a faire towne full of people. 'Ah, faire knight,' said they, all, 'here is within this tower a dolorous lady, that hath beene there in paines many winters; for ever she boyleth in scalding water. And but late,' said all the people, 'sir Gawaine was here, and he might not helpe her, and so he left her still in paine.' 'Well,' said sir Launcelot, 'then shew me what I shall doe.' Then they brought sir Launcelot into the tower. And when he came to the chamber there as this lady was, the doores of iron unlocked and unbolted, and so sir Launcelot went into the chamber that was as hot as any stew, and there sir Launcelot tooke the fairest lady by the hand that ever he saw. And by enchantment queene Morgan le Fay and the queen of Northgalis had put her there in those paines, because she was called one of the fairest ladies in that countrey. And there shee had beene well five yeares, and never might shee bee delivered out of her great paines unto the time that the best knight of the world had taken her by the hand. So the people gave thanks unto God, and said, 'Sir knight, sith ye have delivered this lady, yee shall deliver us

¹ *Galahad*—*Galahalt*, Caxton. He is usually called Galaad in the French prose romance.

² *Corbin*.—Perhaps this is meant for Corwen in Merionethshire. In the middle ages, a bridge was usually accompanied by a tower.

from a serpent that is here in a tombe.' Then sir Launcelot tooke his shield, and said, 'Bring me thither, and what I may doe unto the pleasure of God and you, I will doe it.' So when sir Launcelot came there, he saw written upon the tombe letters of gold that said thus, 'Heere shall come a libbard of kings blood, and hee shall slay this serpent, and this libbard shall engender a lyon in this forraine cuntry, the which lyon shall passe all other knights.' So then sir Launcelot lift up the tombe, and there came out an horrible and a fenly¹ dragon, spitting fire out of his mouth.

Then sir Launcelot drew out his sword, and at the last with great paine sir Launcelot slew the dragon. Therewithall came king Pelles and saluted sir Launcelot, and hee him againe. 'Faie knight,' said the king, 'what is your name? I require you of your knighthood tell me.'

CHAP. II.—*How sir Launcelot came unto king Pelles, and of the sancgreall, and how hee met with faie Elaine, king Pelles daughter.*

'SIR,' said sir Launcelot, 'wit ye well my name is sir Launcelot du Lake.' 'And my name is sir Pelles, king of the forrain cuntry, and nigh cosin unto Joseph of Arimathy².' Then either of them made much of other, and so they went into the castle for to take their repast. And anon there came in a dove at a window, and in her bill there seemed a little sencer of gold, and therewithal there was such a savour as though all the spicery of the world had beene there; and forthwithall there was upon the table all manner of meates and drinckes that they could thinke upon. So there came a damosell, passing faie and young, and she beare a vessell of gold betweene her hands, and thereto the king kneeled devoutly and said his prayers, and so did all that were there. 'Oh, Jesu,' said sir Launcelot, 'what may this meane?' 'This is,' said king Pelles, 'the richest thing that any man hath living; and when this thing goeth about, the round table shall bee broken. And wit yee well,' said king Pelles, 'that this is the holy sancgreall³ which ye have heere seene.' So king Pelles and sir Launcelot led their lives the most part of that day. And full faine would king Pelles have had sir Launcelot pay courte to his daughter,

¹ *Fenly*.—*Friendly*, Caxton.

² *Joseph of Arimathy*.—See book i. p. 97, where the earlier history of king Pelles, or Pellam, is recounted.

³ *The holy sancgreall*.—The saint graal, or holy dish, was pretended to be the vessel in which the paschal lamb was placed at our Saviour's last supper; and which, according to the fable, Joseph of Arimathæa preserved and brought with him to Britain. It is sufficiently described in the following pages. The Roman du St. Graal is one of the longest and dullest of the great mediæval romances of the cycle of king Arthur.

faire dame Elaine, for to fulfill an ancient prophesie. Then came a lady that hight dame Brisen, and this dame Brisen was one of the greatest enchantresses that was at that time in the world living. Then anon by dame Brisens wit shee made one to come to sir Launcelot that he knew well, and this man brought him a ring¹ from queen Guenever, such a one as shee was wont to weare. And when sir Launcelot saw that token, wit ye well he was never so faine. 'Where is my lady queene Guenever?' said sir Launcelot. 'She is in the castle of Case²,' said the messenger, 'but five mile hence.' Then sir Launcelot thought to be there that same night. And then this dame Brisen, by the commandement of king Pelles, let send his daughter to that castle with twenty-five knights. Then sir Launcelot rode unto that castle, and there anon he was received worshipfully, with such people unto him seeming as were about queene Guenever. So when sir Launcelot was alighted dame Brisen met him, and hee was led into his chamber. And then dame Brisen brought sir Launcelot a cuppe full of wine, and as soone as hee had drink that wine hee was so assoted that hee was dazed, and wist not rightly what hee did: and so anon when dame Brisen brought him into the presence of the lady Elaine he weened she was queene Guenever. And so they remained together unto sixe of the clooke³ on the morrow; and then sir Launcelot remembred him, and he arose and went to the window.

CHAP. III.—*How sir Launcelot was displeased when hee saw dame Elaine, and of the birth of Galahad.*

AND anon as he had unshut the window, the enchauntment was gone. Then sir Launcelot saw the faire lady dame Elaine that shee was not the queene Guenever. 'Ah, thou false traitresse,' said sir Launcelot, 'why hast thou betrayed mee? Anon tell mee what thou art?' She answered and said, 'Sir, I am Elaine, the daughter of king Pelles; and I require of you that you have mercy on me, and forgive me.' 'Well,' said sir Launcelot, 'I will forgive you this deede': and therewith hee tooke her up in his armes and kissed her, for shee was a faire lady and a young. Then she said, 'My lord sir Laun-

¹ *A ring.*—It has been observed in a former note, (book ii. p. 326.) that the ring ayed an important part in all the transactions of the Middle Ages. It identified the dividual who bore it, and therefore was used as a token of delegation of authority, of recognition, of identification of the person, and for many other purposes.

² *Castle of Case.*—It is not impossible that the writer of the romance may have had in his mind the rather celebrated old castle of Cause, or Caurse, the vast entrenchments of which are still visible near Minsterley, on the Welsh border of Shropshire.

³ *Sixe of the clooke.*—*Untyl undorne of the morn.* Caxton. Undern is usually considered as corresponding to nine o'clock in the morning.

celot, I beseech you see me as soone as you may, for I have obeyed me unto the prophesy that my father told me, and by his commandement, to fulfill this prophesie, I have given the greatest riches and the fairest floure that ever I had; and therefore, gentle knight, owe me your good wil.' And so sir Launcelot departed and rode till he came to the castle of Corbin, where her father was. And in the winter thereafter the lady Elaine had a faire child, and he was named Galahad, for because sir Launcelot was so named at the font stone, and after that the lady of the lake confirmed him sir Launcelot du Lake. Then after this, there came a knight unto her whose name was sir Bromell le Plech, which was a great lord, and he had loved that lady long, and he evermore desired her that hee might wed her; till upon a day she said to sir Bromell, 'Sir, it is sir Launcelot du Lake that I love, and none other, therefore woe mee no longer.' 'Wit ye wel, my lady,' said sir Bromell, 'and I promise you the twelve moneths I shall keepe the bridge of Corbin, for sir Lancelots sake, that he shall neither come nor go to you but I shal meet with him.'

CHAP. IV.—*How sir Bors came to dame Elaine, and saw Galahad, and how he was fed with the sanggreall.*

THEN, as it befell by fortune and adventure, sir Bors de Ganis, which was nephew unto sir Launcelot, came over that bridge, and ther sir Bromell and sir Bors justed, and sir Bors smote sir Bromell such a buffet that he bare him over his horse taile. And then sir Bors alighted, and long they fought till at the last sir Bromell was laid unto the ground. Then sir Bromel cried sir Bors mercy, and yeelded him. And sir Bors rode unto king Pelles, that was within Corbin. And when the king and dame Elaine knew that sir Bors was nephew unto sir Launcelot, they made him great cheere. Then said dame Elaine, 'We mervaile much where sir Launcelot is, for he came never heere but once.' 'Mervaile not,' said sir Bors, 'for all this halfe yeaere he hath bene in prison with queene Morgan le Fay, king Arthurs sister.' 'Alas,' said dame Elaine, 'that me sore repenteth.' And ever sir Bors beheld the child that shee had in her armes; and ever him seemed it was passing like sir Launcelot. And so ther came in a whit dove, and shee beare a little sencer of gold in her bill, and anon there was all manner of meates and drinkes; and there was a maiden that bare the sanggreall, and she said openly, 'Wit ye well, sir Bors, that this child is Galahad that shall sit in the siege perilous, and also shall achieve the sanggreall; and hee shall be much better than ever was sir Launcelot du Lake, his father.' And then they kneeled downe and made their devotions, and there was

such a savour as all the spicery in the world had beene there. And when the dove tooke her flight, the maiden vanished away with the sancgreal as she came. 'Sir,' said sir Bors unto king Pelles, 'this castle may well be called the castle adventurous, for here be many strange adventures.' 'That is truth,' said king Pelles, 'For I let you to wit, here shall no knight winne no worship but if hee be of worship himselfe, and of good living, and that loveth God, and dreadeth God, and else hee getteth no worship heere, be hee never so hardy.' 'That is a wonderfull thing,' said sir Bors; 'what yee meane in this countrey I wote not, for yee have many strange adventures; therefore I will lie in this castle this night.' 'Then I counsaile you,' said king Pelles, 'for to be confessed cleane.' 'As for that,' said sir Bors, 'I will be confessed with a good will.' So sir Bors was confessed; and was led to bed into a faire large chamber, and many doores were shut about that chamber. And right so he saw come in a light that he might wel see a speare great and long which come straight upon him pointlong¹. And so sir Bors seemed that the head of the speare brent like a taper; and anon, or sir Bors wist, the speare head smote him into the shoulder an hand breadth in deepnesse, and that wound grieved sir Bors passing sore, and then he laid him downe againe for paine; and anon therewithall came a knight all armed, and he said to sir Bors, 'Arise, sir knight, and fight with mee.' 'I am sore hurt,' said sir Bors, 'but yet I shall not faile thee.' And so at the last sir Bors beare him alwaies backward, until hee came to a chamber doore, and there that knight went into that chamber and ther rested him a great while. And when he had rested him, he came out freshly againe, and began a new battaile with sir Bors mightely and strongly.

CHAP. V.—*How sir Bors made sir Pedivere to yeeld him, and of mervailous adventures that he had, and how he achieved them.*

THEN sir Bors smote the knight so sore that hee fell downe. And then that knight yeelded him to sir Bors. 'What is your name?' said sir Bors. 'Sir,' said that knight, 'my name is sir Pedivere of the straight marches.' So then departed sir Pedivere. And then sir Bors lay him downe for to rest him; and then he heard and felt much noyse in that chamber, and then sir Bors espied that there came in, he wist not whether at the doores or windowes, a shot of arowes and quarels², so-thicke that hee had great mervaile of it, and there fell many upon him and hurt him in the bare places. And then sir Bors was ware where

¹ *Pointlong.*—*Poyntelyng*, Caxton; i. e. point foremost.

² *Quarels.*—Quarrels were, properly, the arrows discharged from crossbows.

came in an hedious lyon, and after a dragon, passing terrible, and also an horrible libbard¹ and an old, and there they did a greate battaile together. And anon forthwith there came an old man into the hall, and hee sat him downe in a faire chaire, and there seemed to bee two great adders about his neck. And then the old man had an harpe, and there he sung an old song, how Joseph of Arimathy come into this land. And then sir Bors seemed that there came the whitest dove that ever he saw, with a little golden sencer in her mouth, and anon therewithall the tempest seased and passed that before was merveilous to heere. So was al the court ful of good savors. Then sir Bors saw foure faire children that bare foure tapers, and an old man in the midst of the children with a sencer in his one hand, and a speare in his other hand; and that same spear was called the speare of vengeance.

CHAP. VI.—*How sir Bors departed, and how sir Launcelot was rebuked of queene Guenever, and of his excuse.*

‘NOW,’ said that old man unto sirs Bors, ‘goe ye unto your cosin sir Lancelot, and tell him of this adventure, the which had beene the most convenient for him of all earthly knights, but sinne is so foule in him that hee may not achieve such holy deedes; for had not beene his sinne he had passed all the knights that ever was in his dayes.’ And then sir Bors saw foure gentlewomen comming by him poorely bescene; and hee saw where as they entred into a chamber where was great light, as it were a summer light, and the women kneeled downe before an alter of silver with foure pillowes, and as it had beene a bishop kneeling downe before that table of silver; and there he heard a voyce that said, ‘Goe thou hence, thou sir Bors, for as yet thou art not worthie to bee in this place.’ And then hee went backward to his bed till on the morrow. And on the morrow king Pelles made great joy of sir Bors, and then hee departed and rode to Camelot, and there hee found sir Launcelot du Lake, and told him of the adventures that he had seene with king Pelles at Corbin.

So the noyse sprang in king Arthurs court concerning the child of faire Elaine the daughter of king Pelles; wherefore queene Guenever was wroth, and gave many rebukes unto sir Launcelot, and called him false knight. And then sir Launcelot told the queene all, and how hee was deceived by enchantment; so the queene held sir Launcelot excused. And king Arthur let crie a great feast, that all lords and ladies of England should be there, but if it were such as were rebellious against him.

¹ Libbard.—A leopard.

CHAP. VII.—*How dame Elaine, Galahads mother, came in great estate unto Camelot, and how sir Launcelot behaved him there.*

AND when dame Elaine the daughter of king Pelles hard of this feast, she sent unto her father and required him that hee would give her leave for to ride unto that feast. So shee rode with twentie knights and ten ladies and gentlewomen to the number of an hundred horses. And when shee came to Camelot, king Arthur and queene Guenever said, and all the knights, that dame Elaine was the fairest and the best beseeue lady that ever was in that court. And anon as king Arthur wist that shee was come, hee met her and saluted her, and so did the most part of al the knights of the round table, both sir Tristram, sir Bleoberis, and sir Gawaine, and many moe that I will not rehearse. But when sir Launcelot saw her, hee was sore ashamed, and hee would not see her nor yet speake to her; and yet sir Launcelot thought shee was the fairest woman that hee saw in his life daies. But when dame Elaine saw that sir Launcelot would not speake to her, shee was so heavy that she wend her heart would have brast; for wit yee well that out of measure shee loved him. So when dame Elaine was brought unto queene Guenever, either made other good cheare by countenance, but nothing with hearts. Then at night the queene commanded that dame Elaine should sleepe in a chamber nigh unto her chamber, and all under one roofe; and so it was done as the queene had commanded.

CHAP. VIII.—*How dame Elaine was commanded by queen Guenever for to avoide the court, and how sir Launcelot became mad.*

QUEENE Guenever awoke before day, and heard one talking; and, by the voice, she knew it was sir Launcelot: and then she met him on the floore, and thus she said, 'False traitoure knight that thou art, looke thou never abide in my court or come again in my sight.' And then queene Guenever departed. Then sir Launcelot lept out from a bay-window into a gardin; and from her window the faire lady dame Elaine saw him run he wist not whither. Anon queene Guenever came to dame Elaine: 'I warne and charge you, dame Elaine,' said the queene, 'that when it is day light to avoide my court; and for the love yee owe to sir Launcelot, discover not your counsell, for and ye doe it will be his death.' So on the morrow dame Elaine tooke her leave to depart, and shee would no longer abide. Then king Arthur brought her on her way with moe then an hundred knights through a great forrest. And by the way shee told sir Bors de Ganis all how it betide that same night, and how the queene had rebuked sir

Launcelot, and how shee had seen him leap out at a bay window extraught¹ out of his wit 'Alas!' said sir Bors, 'betweene you both yee have destroyed that good knight.' 'As for me,' said dame Elaine, 'I said never nor did never thing that should in any wise displease him.' 'Now fare well, dame Elaine,' said sir Bors, 'and hold my lord king Arthur with a tale as long as ye may, for I will turne againe unto queene Guenever; and I require you, as yee will have my service, make good watch, and espie if yee may see my lord sir Launcelot.' 'Madame,' said dame Brisen, 'I pray you heartely let sir Bors depart, and hie him with all his might as fast as he may to seeke sir Launcelot, for I warne you he is cleane out of his mind, and yet hee shall be wel holpen, and but by miracle.' Then wept dame Elaine, and so did sir Bors de Ganis; and so they departed, and sir Bors rode straight unto queene Guenever. And when she saw sir Bors, shee began to weepe as shee had beene wood. 'Fie upon your weeping!' said sir Bors, 'for ye weepe never but when there is no boote. Alas! that ever sir Launcelots kinne saw you; for now have ye lost the best knight of all our blood.' 'Alas!' said sir Ector de Maris. 'Alas!' said sir Lionell.

CHAP. IX.—*What sorrow queene Guenever made for sir Launcelot, and how he was sought by knights of his kinne.*

AND when the queene heard them say so, shee fell to the ground in a deadly sound; and when shee was come to her selfe againe shee kneeled afore the three knights, and besought them to seeke him, and not to spare for no goods but that he be found, 'for I wot well he is out of his minde.' And sir Bors, sir Ector, sir Lyonell, departed from the queene, for they might not abide no longer for sorrow: and then the queen sent them treasure enough for their expences, and so they tooke their horses and their armour, and departed. And thus they rode well nigh a quarter of a yeare, endlong and overthwart, in many places, forrests and wildernesses, and oftentimes were evill lodged for his sake, and yet for all their labour and seeking could they never here word of him. So then at the last sir Bors and his fellowes met with a knight that hight sir Melion de Tartare. 'Now, faire knight,' said sir Bors, 'whether be ye going?' for they knew either other afore time. 'Sir,' said sir Melion, 'I am in the way toward the court of king Arthur.' So when sir Melion was come unto the court of king Arthur, hee told the king and the queene and all the fellowship of the round table what sir Bors had said of sir Lancelot. Then sir Gawaine, sir Ewaine, sir Sagamore le Desirous, sir Aglovale, and sir

¹ *Extraught*.—Appears to be here used for *distracted*, or *distracted*. Caxton has *araged*.

Percivale de Galis tooke upon them by the great desire of king Arthur, and in especiall by the queen, to seek throughout all England, Wales, and Scotland, to find sir Launcelot; and with them rode eightene knights moe to beare them fellowship. And thus as these noble knights rode together, they by one assent departed asunder, and then they rode by two, by three, by foure, and by five; and ever they assigned where they should meete. And so sir Aglovale and sir Percivale rode together unto their mother, which was a queene in those dayes; and when shee saw her two sonnes, for joy shee wept right tenderly, and then she kneeled downe upon both her knees before sir Aglovale and sir Percivale, and besought them to abide at home with her. 'Ah, sweete mother,' said sir Percivale, 'we may not abide here, for we bee come of kings blood on both parties, and therefore, mother, it is our kind to hunt at armes and noble deedes.' Then there was great weeping and sobbing in the court when they should depart, and shee fell down in a sownd in the midst of the court.

CHAP. X.—*How a servant of sir Aglovaies was slaine, and what vengeance sir Aglovale and sir Percivale did therefore.*

AS soone as shee came againe to her selfe, she sent a squire after them with spending enough for them; and when the squire had overtook them, they would not suffer him to ride with them, but sent him home againe to comfort their mother, praying her meekely of her blessing. And so this squire was benighted, and by misfortune hee hapned to come unto a castle where dwelled a baron, and so, when the squire was come into the castle, the lord asked him from whence hee came and whom he served. 'My lord,' said the squire, 'I serve a good knight that is called sir Aglovale.' 'Well, my fellow,' said the lord of that castle, 'for sir Aglovaies sake thou shalt have an evill lodging, for Aglovale slew my brother, and therefore thou shalt die on part of payment.' And then the lord commanded his men to have him out of the castle, and there they slew him out of mercy¹. Right so on the morrow came sir Aglovale and sir Percivale riding by a church-yard, where men and women were busie, and beheld the dead squire, and thought to bury him. 'What is there,' said sir Aglovale, 'that ye behold so fast?' A good man start forth and said, 'Faire knight, here lyeth a squire slaine shamefully this night.' 'How was he slaine, faire fellow?' said sir Aglovale. 'My faire sir,' said the man, 'the lord of this castle lodged this squire this night, and because hee said hee was servant unto a good knight that is with king Arthur, his name is sir Aglovale, therefore the lord

¹ *Out of mercy.*—i.e. without mercy.

commanded to slay him, and for this cause he is slaine.' 'Gramercy,' said sir Aglovale, 'and lightly shall yee see his death revenged, for I am the same knight for whom this squire was slaine.' Then sir Aglovale called unto him sir Percivale, and bad him alight quickly. And as soone as they were within the castle gate, sir Aglovale bad the porter goe into his lord 'and tell him that I am sir Aglovale, for whom this squire was slaine this night.' Anon the porter told this unto his lord, whose name was sir Goodwin, and anon he armed him, and then he came into the court: and then they lashed together as egerly as it had beene two wild lyons; and sir Percivale fought with all the remnant that would fight, and so within a while sir Percivale had slaine all that would withstand him. And within a little while sir Aglovale had downe sir Goodwin to the earth, and there hee unlaced his helme, and strooke off his head. And then they departed, and tooke their horses; and then they let carry the dead squire unto a priory, and there they buried him.

CHAP. XI.—*How sir Percivale departed secretly from his brother, and how hee loosed a knight bound with a chaine, and of other things.*

AND when this was done, they rode into many countreys, ever enquiring after sir Launcelot, but in no wise they could here of him. And at the last they came to a castle hight Cardican¹, and there sir Percivale and sir Aglovale were lodged together; and prively about midnight sir Percivale came to sir Aglovaless squire, and said, 'Arise, and make thee ready, for thou and I will ride away secretly.' And so they rode till it was after noone, and then they came upon a bridge of stone, and there hee found a knight that was bound with a chaine fast about the wast unto a pillar of marble. 'O faire knight,' said that bound knight, 'I requier thee loose mee of my bands.' 'What knight are yee?' said sir Percivale; 'and for what cause are yee so bound?' 'Sir, I shall tell you,' said that knight; 'I am a knight of the round table, and my name is sir Persides, and thus by adventure I came this way, and here I lodged in this castle at the bridge foote, and therein dwelleth an uncurteous lady, and because that I refused her love, shee set her men upon mee sodainly or that I might come to my weapon, and thus they bound me, and heere I wot well I shall die, but if some man of worship breake my bands.' 'Be yee of good cheare,' said sir Percivale, 'and because yee are a knight of the round table as well as I, I trust to God to breake your bands.' And therewith sir Percivale drew out his sword, and

¹ *Cardican*.—I suppose meant for Cardigan.

strooke at the chaine with such a might that hee cut atwo the chaine and went through sir Persides hawberke, and hurt him a little. And therewithall sir Persides saw a knight comming out of the castle all that he might flying. 'Beware,' said sir Persides, 'yonder commeth a man that will have to doe with you.' 'Let him come,' said sir Percivale. And so he met with that knight in the midst of the bridge, and sir Percivale gave him such a buffet that hee smote him quite from his horse and over a part of the bridge, that had not beene a little vessell underneth the bridge, that knight had been drowned. And then sir Percivale tooke the knights horse, and made sir Persides to mount upon him; and so they rode unto the castle, and bad the lady deliver sir Persides servants, or else he would sley all that he might find; and so for feare shee delivered them all. And so sir Persides brought sir Percivale unto his owne castle; and there hee made him the best cheare that he could devise all that night. And on the morrow, when sir Percivale had heard masse and broken his fast, hee bad sir Persides 'ride unto king Arthur, and tell the king how yee mette with me, and tell my brother sir Aglovale how I rescwd you; and tell him that I will never see him nor the court till I have found sir Launcelot. Also, tell sir Kay the seneshall and sir Mordred, that I trust unto Jesu to bee of as great worthynesse as either of them; for tell them that I shal never forget their mocks and scornes that they did to me that day when I was made knight, and tell them that I will never see that court till men speake of me more worship then ever man did of any of them both.' And sir Persides departed from sir Percivale, and then hee rode unto king Arthur, and told there of sir Percivale; and when sir Aglovale heard him speake of his brother sir Percivale, he said, 'Hee departed from me unkindly.'

CHAP. XII.—*How sir Percivale met with sir Ector, and how they fought long together, and how they had almost slaine each other.*

NOW will we returne unto sir Percivale, that rode long, and in a forrest he met a knight with a broken shielde and a broken helme, and as soone as either saw other readily, they made them ready to just, and so hurled together with all the might of their horses, and met together so hard that sir Percivale was smitten to the earth. And then sir Percivale arose lightly, and cast his shield upon his shoulder, and drew his sword, and bad the other knight alight and doe battaile to the uttermost. 'Will yee more?' said the knight; and therewith he alighted, and put his horse from him, and then they came together an easie pace, and there they fought neere halfe a day,

and never rested them but little; and there was none of them both that had lesse wounds then fifteen, and they bled so much that it was mervaille that they stooode upon their feete. But this knight that fought with sir Percivale was a proved knight and a well fighting, and sir Percivale was young and strong, not knowing in fighting as the other was. Then sir Percivale spake first and said, 'Sir knight, hold thy hand a littell while still, for I requier thee of gentlenesse tell me thy name, for I was never or this time matched.' 'So God me helpe,' said the other knight, 'and never before this time was there never no manner of knight the which wounded and hurt me so dangerously as thou hast done; and now shalt thou wit that I am a knight of the round table, and my name is sir Ector de Maris, brother unto the good knight sir Launcelot du Lake.' 'Alas!' said sir Percivale, 'and my name is sir Percivale de Galis, that have made my quest for to seeke sir Launcelot, now am I seker¹ that I shal never finish my quest, for yee have slaine me.' 'It is not so,' said sir Ector, 'for I am slaine by your hands; therefore ride yee here by unto a priorie, and bring me a priest that I may receive my Saviour; and when yee come unto the court of king Arthur, tell not my brother sir Launcelot how yee have slaine me, for then he will bee your mortall enemy, but yee may say that I was slaine in my quest as I sought him.' 'Alas!' said sir Percivale, 'ye say that thing that never will be, for I am so faint for bleeding that, unlesse I may stand, how should I then take my horse?'

CHAP. XIII.—*How by miracle they were both made whole by the comming of the holy vessell of the sancgreall.*

THEN they made both great dole out of measure. 'This will not availe,' said sir Percivale; and then he kneeled downe and made his praiers devoutly unto Almightye God. Right so there came by the holy vessell of the sancgreall, with all maner of sweetnesse and savour, but they could not readily see who beare that holy vessell; but sir Percivale had a glimmering of that vessell, and of the maiden that beare it. And forthwith they were both as whole of limme and hide as ever they were in their life dayes, wherefore they gave thanks unto Almightye God right devoutly. 'O Jesu,' said sir Percivale, 'what may this meane that wee bee thus healed, and right now we were at the point of dying?' 'I wot well,' said sir Ector, 'what it is; it is an holy vessell that is borne by a maiden, and therin is a part of the holy blood² of our

¹ *Seker*.—Sure.

² *Holy Blood*.—Joseph of Arimathæa is pretended to have preserved in the St. Graal some of the blood of Christ, which he had received in it on the occasion of the burial

Lord Jesus Christ, blessed might hee bee ; but it may not bee sene,' said sir Ector, 'but if it bee by a perfect man.' 'So God me helpe,' said sir Percivale, 'I saw a damosell, as me thought, all in whit, with a vessell in both her hands, and foorthwithall I was whole.' So then they tooke their horses and their harneis, and rode talking together ; and so either tould other of their adventures.

CHAP. XIV.—*How sir Launcelot in his madnes took a sword, and fought with a knight, and after left in a bed.*

AND now leave we a little of sir Ector and sir Percivale, and speake wee of sir Launcelot, that suffered and endured many sharpe showers, which ever ranne wild wood from place to place, and lived by fruit and such as he might get, and dranke water, two yeare. And thus, as sir Launcelot wandred heere and there, hee came into a faire meadow where he found a pavilion, and there upon a tree hung a whit shield, and two swords hung therby, and two speares there leaned against a tree ; and sir Launcelot lept to the one sword, and then hee lashed at the shield that all the meadow range of the dints that he gave with such a noyse as ten knights had fought together. Then there came foorth a dwarfe, and lept unto sir Launcelot, and would have had the sword out of his hand ; and then sir Launcelot took him by both the shoulders and threw him to the ground upon his necke, and therewithall the dwarfe cried for helpe. Then came forth a likely knight, and well apparalled in scarlet, furred with *meniver*¹. And anon as he saw sir Launcelot, he deemed that hee should be out of his wit, and then he said with faire speech, 'Good friend, lay downe that sword, for, as me seemeth, thou hast more neede to sleepe, and of warme cloathes then to weld that sword.' 'As for that,' said sir Launcelot, 'come thou not nigh mee, for, and thou doe, wit thou well I will slay thee.' And when the knight of the pavilion saw that, he start backward within the pavilion. And then the dwarfe armed him lightly, and so the knight thought by force and might to take the sword from sir Launcelot ; and so he came stepping out. And when hee come all armed with his sword in his hand, sir Launcelot hit him upon the helme such a buffet, that the strooke troubled his braines ; and therewith the sword brake in three, and the knight fell to the ground as though he had beene dead, the blood

of the Saviour. It may be remarked that the similarity in sound between *Saint Graal* and *Sang real* (the real blood) has led to considerable confusion among old and modern writers ; and it has been supposed by some that the real blood, and not the sacred dish, was the object of 'quest' to king Arthur's knights.

¹ *Meniver*.—More usually spelt *minever*, a species of fur, much valued in the Middle Ages.

brasting out at his mouth, nose, and ears. And then sir Launcelot ranne into the pavilion; and in that pavilion there was a lady, and lightly shee ranne out into the medow. And when shee saw her lord lye on the ground, like to be dead, then shee cried and wept as though she had beene mad. Then with her noyse the knight awaked out of his sowne, and looked up quickly with his eyes; and then hee asked her where the mad man was that had given him such a buffet, for 'such a buffet had I never of mans hand.' 'Sir,' said the dwarfe, 'it is no worship to hurt him, for hee is a man out of his wit, and doubt ye not he hath beene a man of great worship, and for some hartely sorrow that he hath taken he is fallen mad; and me seemeth,' said the dwarfe, 'that hee resembleth much unto sir Launcelot du Lake, for him I saw at the great turnement beside Lonazep.' 'Jesu defend,' said that knight, 'that ever the noble knight sir Launcelot should be in such a plight! but whatsover he be,' said that knight, 'harme will I none doe him.' And this knights name was sir Bliaunt. Then he said unto the dwarfe, 'Goe thou in all hast on horsebacke unto my brother sir Seliaunt, that is at the Castle Blanche¹, and tell him of mine adventure, and bid him bring with him an horse-litter, and then will we beare this knight unto my castle.'

CHAP. XV.—*How sir Launcelot was carried in a horse litter, and how sir Lancelot rescued sir Bliaunt his host.*

SO the dwarfe rode fast, and came againe, and brought sir Seliaunt with him, and sixe men with an horselitter; and so they took up a fether-bed into the which sir Launcelot had crept, and so carryed al with them to the Castle Blanche, and he never wakned untill hee was within the castle; and then they bound his hands and his feet, and gave him good meates and good drinks, and brought him againe to his strength and his fairenesse; but in his wit they could not bring him againe, nor to know himselfe. Thus sir Launcelot was there more then a yeare and a halfe, honestly arrayed and faire faren withall. Then upon a day this lord of that castle, sir Bliaunt, tooke his armes on horsebacke with a speare to seeke adventures, and as hee rode in a forrest there met him two knights adventurous; the one was sir Breuse saunce Pittie, and his brother sir Bertlot. And these two ranne both at once upon sir Bliaunt, and at the last sir Bliaunt was sore wounded, and felt himselfe faint, and then he fled on horse-

¹ *Castle Blanche*.—A White-castle stood near Llandillo, in Monmouthshire; but it is here probably a mere castle of romance. Caxton reads *Syr Selvaunt*, here and in the next chanter.

backe toward his castle. And they came hurling under the castle, where sir Launcelot lay in a window and saw two knights laid upon sir Bliaunt with their swords, and when sir Launcelot saw that, hee brake his chaines from his legges and from his armes, and in the breaking he hurt both his hands. And so sir Launcelot ranne out at a posterne, and there hee pulled downe Bertlot with his bare hands from his horse, and therewithall hee writhed his sword out of his hands, and so hee lept unto sir Breuse, and gave him such a buffet upon the head that he tumbled backward over his horse croupe. And when sir Bertlot saw his brother have such a fall, he gat a spear in his hand, and would have run sir Lancelot through. That saw sir Bliaunt, and strooke off the hand of sir Bertlot; and then sir Breuse and sir Bertlot gat their horses and fled away. When sir Seliaunt came, and saw what sir Launcelot had done for his brother, then he thanked God, and so did his brother, that ever they did him any good. But when sir Bliaunt saw that sir Launcelot was hurt with the breaking of his chaines, then hee was sorry that he had bound him. Then they made great joy of sir Launcelot, and they bound him no more; and so he abode there halfe a yeare and more. And in a morning early sir Launcelot was ware where came a great boore, with hunters and many hounds nigh him; and at the last sir Launcelot was ware where on of the hunters alighted and tied his horse to a tree, and leaned his speare against the tree.

CHAP. XVI.—*How sir Launcelot fought against a boore, and slew him, and how he was hurt, and after brought unto an hermitage.*

SO came sir Launcelot and found the horse bound to a tree, and a speare leaning against a tree, and a sword tied unto the saddle bow. And then sir Launcelot lept into the saddle, and gat that speare in his hand, and then hee rode after the boore; and the boore turned and faced sir Launcelot beside a tree fast by an hermitage. Then sir Launcelot ranne at the boore with his speare; and therewith the boore turned him sodainely and rove¹ out the lungs and the heart of sir Launcelots horse; so sir Launcelot fell to the earth, and, or ever sir Launcelot might get from his horse, the boore rove him on the brawne of the thigh up to the huckle bone². And then sir Launcelot gat him on his feete, and smote off the boores head at one strooke; and therewith came out the hermit, and when he saw him have such a wound, then the hermit came unto sir Launcelot and bemoaned him, and would have had him unto his

¹ *Rove*.—Tore, split; the past tense of rive.

² *Huckle-bone*.—The *hough-bone*, Caxton. The hip-bone.

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hermitage. But when sir Launcelot heard him speake, he was so wroth with his wound that he ranne upon the hermit to have slaine him; and then the hermit ranne away; and in his way he met with a good knight with many men. Then that knight, at the desire of the hermit, gat a cart, and in that cart that knight put the boore and sir Launcelot, for sir Launcelot was so feeble that they might right easely deale with him. And so sir Launcelot was brought to the hermitage, and the hermit healed him of his wound; but the hermit might not finde sir Launcelot sustenance, and so he empaired and waxed feeble both of his body and of his wit for default of sustenance, and waxed more wooder then he was aforehand. And then upon a day sir Launcelot ranne his way into the forrest; and by adventure came into the cittie of Corbin, where dame Elaine was. And so when hee was entred into the towne, he ranne through the towne to the castle; and then all the young men of the cittie ranne after sir Launcelot, and there they threw turves at him, and gave him many sad strooks; and as sir Launcelot might reach any of them, he threw them so that they would never more come in his hands, for of some he brake their leggs and some their armes, and so fled into the castle. And then came out knights and squires for to rescue sir Launcelot; and when they saw so many wounds upon him, they all deemed that hee had beene a man of worship. And then they ordained cloathes unto his body, and straw underneth him, and a little house, and then every day they would throw him meate, and set him drink, but there were few or non that would bring meate to his hands.

CHAP. XVII.—*How sir Launcelot was knowne by dame Elaine, and how he was borne into a chamber, and after healed by the holy sancgreal.*

SO it befell that king Pelles had a nephew whose name was Castor, and he desired of the king his uncle for to be made knight; and so the king made him knight at the feast of Candlemasse. And when Castor was made knight, that same day he gave many gownes¹; and so sir Castor sent for the foole, that was sir Launcelot, and hee gave sir Launcelot a robe of scarlet and all that belonged unto him. And when sir Launcelot was arrayed like a knight hee went into the garden, and laid him downe by a well and slept. And so at after-noonne dame Elaine and her maidens came into the garden for to play them; and as they romed up and downe, one of dame Elaines maidens espied where lay a goodly man by the well sleeping, and anon shewed

¹ *Many gownes.*—The practice of distributing robes as rewards or prizes at the great festivals of the feudal chiefs was universal, and is frequently alluded to in the old writers.

him unto dame Elaine. And when dame Elaine beheld, anon shee fell in remembrance of him, and knew him verily for sir Launcelot, and therewith she fell on weeping so heartily that shee sanke downe to the ground; and when she had wept a great while, then she arose and called her maidens, and said she was sicke. And so she went out of the garden, and went straight unto her father, and there she tooke him apart by himselfe, and then shee said, 'Oh, father, now have I neede of your helpe, and thus it is: in your garden I went for to sport me, and there by the well I found sir Launcelot du Lake sleeping. 'I may not beleve it,' said king Pelles. 'Sir,' said she, 'truly he is ther, and me seemeth that hee should bee distraught out of his wit.' Then the king called unto him such as hee most trusted, a foure persons and dame Elaine his daughter; and when they came to the well, and beheld sir Launcelot, anon dame Brisen knew him. 'Sir,' said dame Brisen, 'wee must be wise and ware how wee deale with him, for this knight is out of his mind, and if that we awake him rudely, what hee will doe we all know not; but yee shall abide, and I shall throw such an enchantment upon him, that hee shall not awake within the space of an houre.' And so shee did. And these foure men and these ladies laid hand upon sir Launcelot, and so they beare him into the chamber where as was the holy vessell of sancgreal, and by force sir Launcelot was laide by that holy vessell; and then there came an holy man and uncovered the vessell, and so by myracle, and by vertue of that holy vessell, sir Launcelot was all healed and recovered. And when hee was awaked, hee groned, and sighed sore, and complained greatly that hee was passing sore.

CHAP. XVIII.—*How sir Launcelot, after that he was whole and had his minde, he was ashamed, and how dame Elaine desired a castlle for him.*

AND when sir Launcelot saw king Pelles and dame Elaine, he waxed ashamed, and thus hee said, 'O good Lord Jesu, how came I heere? for Gods sake, my lord, let me wit how I came here.' 'Sir,' said dame Elaine, 'into this countrey yee came like a mad man all out of your wit, and heere yee have beene kept as a foole, and no creature heere knew what yee weere till that by fortune a maide of mine brought mee unto you where as yee lay sleeping by a well side, and anon as I verily beheld you I knew you; and then I told my father, and so yee were brought before this holy vessell, and by the vertue of it thus were yee healed.' 'O Jesu, mercy!' said sir Launcelot, 'if this bee sooth, how many be there that know of my woodnesse?' 'So God mee helpe,' said dame Elaine, 'no moe but my father and I and dame Brisen.' 'Now for Christs love,'

said sir Launcelot, 'keepe it secret, and let no man know it in the world, for I am sore ashamed that I have beene thus miscaried, for I am banished out of the country of Logris for ever.' And so sir Launcelot lay more then a fourtnight or ever hee might stir for sorenesse. And then upon a day hee said unto dame Elaine these words, 'Faire lady Elaine, for your sake I have had much travaile, care, and anguish, I neede not to rehearse it, yee know well how. Now will yee, for my love, goe unto your father and get me a place of him wherein I may dwell, for in the court of king Arthur may I never come.' So forthwith shee went unto her father, and said, 'Sir, my lord sir Launcelot desireth to bee heere by you in some castle of yours.' 'Wel, daughter,' said the king, 'sith it is his desire to abide in these marches, hee shall bee in the castle of Bliant, and there shall yee bee with him, and twentie of the fairest ladies that be in this country, and they shall be of the greatest blood, and also yee shall have ten knights with you; for, daughter, I will that yee wit wee all bee honoured by the blood of the noble knight sir Launcelot.'

CHAP. XIX.—*How sir Launcelot came into Joyous-ile, and there he named himselfe Le chevallier mal-fet.*

THEN went dame Elaine unto sir Launcelot, and told him al how her father had devised. Then came the knight sir Castor (that was nephew unto king Pelles) unto sir Launcelot, and asked him what was his name. 'Sir,' said sir Launcelot, 'my name is Le chevallier mall-fet,' that is as much to say, the knight that hath trespassed. And then after this, king Pelles, with ten knights, and dame Elaine, and twentie ladies, rode unto the castle of Bliant, that stood in an iland enclosed with iron, with a faire water deepe and large; and when they were there, sir Launcelot let call it the Joyous-ile. Then sir Launcelot let make him a shield all of sabels, and a queene crowned in the midst all of silver, and a knight cleane armed kneeling before her, and every day once, for any mirths that all the ladies might make him, hee would looke towards the realme of Logris, where as king Arthur and queene Guenever were: and then would hee fall on a weeping as though his heart should all to-breake. So it beefell that time that sir Launcelot heard of a justing fast by his castle, within sixe mile¹. Then he called unto him a dwarfe, and bad him 'goe unto that justing and make there a crie, in hearing of all the knights that bee there, that there is a good knight in Joyous-ile, that is the castle Bliant, and say that his name is Le chevallier mall-fet, that will

¹ Sixe mile.—Within thre leghes, Caxton.

just against all knights that will come; and who that putteth that knight to the worse, shall have a faire maiden and a jar-fawcon.'

CHAP. XX.—*Of a great turneiment in the Joyous-ile, and how sir Percivale fought with him.*

SO when this crie was made, unto Joyous-ile drew many knights, to the number of five hundred, and wit yee well that there was never seene in king Arthurs daies one knight that did such deeds of armes as sir Launcelot did three dayes together, for hee had the better hand of five hundred knights, and yet there was none slaine of them. And after that sir Launcelot made them all a great feast. And in the meane while came sir Percivale de Galis and sir Ector de Maris under the castle that was called the Joyous-ile; and so, as they beheld that faire castle, they would have gone into it, but they might not for the broad water, and bridge could they none find. Then they saw on that other side a lady with a sparhawke upon her hand, and sir Percivale called unto her, and asked her who was within that castle. 'Faire knight,' said the lady, 'heere within this castle is the fairest lady in this land, and her name is dame Elaine; also we have in this castle the fairest knight that is (I dare well say) now living, and he calleth himselfe Le chevallier mall-fet.' 'How came hee into this marches?' said sir Percivale. 'Truely,' said the damosell, 'hee came into this countrey like a mad man, with dogs and boyes chacing him throughout the citie of Corbin; and by the holy vessell of the sancgreall hee was brought into his wit againe. And if yee list to come into the castle, yee must ride unto the further side of the castle, and there shall yee find a vessell that shall beare you and your horses.' Then they departed, and came unto the vessell, and then sir Percivale alighted, and said unto sir Ector de Maris: 'Yee shall abide me heere, untill I know what manner of knight hee is.' Then sir Percivale passed the water; and when hee came unto the castle gate, he said to the porter, 'Goe thou unto the good knight within the castle, and tell him that heere is come an arraunt knight to just with him.' And there sir Percivale and sir Launcelot encountred with such a might, and their speares were so rude, that both the horses and the knights fell to the ground. And then they avoided their horses, and drew out their swords, and either wounded other passing sore. And at the last sir Percivale spake first, when they had fought more then two houres. 'Faire knight,' said sir Percivale, 'I require thee tell me thy name, for I met never with such a knight as yee are.' 'Sir,' said sir Launcelot, 'my name is Le

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chevallier mall-fet. Now tell me your name,' said sir Launcelot, 'I require you as yee are a gentle knight.' 'Truely,' said sir Percivale, 'my name is sir Percivale de Galis.' 'Alas!' said sir Launcelot, 'what have I don, to fight with you that are a knight of the round table, that sometime was your fellow in king Arthurs court?'

CHAP. XXI.—*How each of them knew other, and of their great courtesie, and how his brother sir Ector came unto him, and of their joy.*

AND therewithall sir Launcelot kneeled downe upon his knees, and threw away his shield and his sword from him. When sir Percivale saw him doe so, hee mervailed what hee meant, and thus hee said unto him, 'Sir knight, whatsoever thou bee, I require thee, upon the high order of knight-hood, tell mee your right name.' Then sir Launcelot answered and said, 'So God me help, my name is sir Launcelot du Lake, king Bans sonne of Benwicke.' 'Alas!' said sir Percivale, 'what thing have I done? I was sent by queene Guenever for to seeke you, and so I have sought you nigh this two yeare; and yonder is sir Ector de Maris, your brother, abideth me on the other side of the water.' Then sir Percivale sent for sir Ector de Maris, and when sir Launcelot had a sight of him, hee ranne unto him and took him in his armes; and either wept upon other that all had great pittie to behold them. Then came dame Elaine, and there shee told sir Ector and sir Percivale how sir Launcelot came into that countrey, and how hee was there healed.

CHAP. XXII.—*How sir Bors and sir Lionell came to king Brandegore, and how sir Bors tooke his sonne Heline le Blancke, and of sir Launcelot.*

NOW leave wee sir Launcelot in Joyous-ile, and returne we unto sir Bors de Ganis and sir Lionell, which had sought sir Launcelot nigh by the space of two yeare, and never could they heare of him. And so as they rode thus by adventure they came unto the house of king Brandegore, and there sir Bors was well knowen for his sonne Helaine le Blancke, who was fiftene yeares olde, had lived from his birth in the courte of king Brandegore, who was his unkle. And on the morrow after, sir Bors came afore king Brandegore, and said, 'Heere is my sonne Helaine le Blancke, I will have him with me unto king Arthurs court.' So when sir Bors should depart, there was made great sorrow for the departing of Helaine le Blancke, and great weeping was there made. But sir Bors and sir Lionell departed; and within short space after their departing they came to Camelot; and when king Arthur

understood that Helaine le Blancke was sir Bors son and nephew unto king Brandegore, then king Arthur let make him knight of the round table, and so he proved a good knight and an adventurous.

Now will wee turne unto our matter of sir Launcelot. It befel upon a day sir Ector and sir Percivale came unto sir Launcelot, and asked him what he would doe, and whether hee would goe with them unto king Arthur or not. 'Nay,' said sir Launcelot, 'that may not be by no meanes, for I was so evill intreated at the court, that I cast me never to come there more.' 'Sir,' said sir Ector, 'king Arthur and all his knights, and in especiall queene Guenever, made such dole and sorrow for the losse of you that it was marvaile to see and heare. Therefore, brother, ride unto the court with us, and I dare well say there was never knight better welcome unto the court then yee. And I wot well and can make it good, it hath cost my lady the queene twentie thousand pound the seeking of you.' So then they tooke their leave of king Pelles and of dame Elaine; and when sir Lancelot should depart, dame Elaine made great sorrow. 'My lord sir Launcelot,' said dame Elaine, 'at this same feast of Pentecost shall your sonne and mine, Galahad, be made knight, for he is full fiftene winters old.' 'Do as yee list,' said sir Launcelot, 'God give him grace to prove a good knight.'

'My lord,' said sir Launcelot, 'if I did any folly, I have found that I sought.' And so the king held him still, and spake no more; but al sir Launcelots kin knew for whom he went out of his mind. And then there were great feasts made and great joy, and many great lords and ladies, when they heard that sir Launcelot was come to the court againe, made great joy.

CHAP. XXIV.—*How La beale Isoud counselled sir Tristram to goe unto the court at the great feast of Pentecost.*

NOW will wee leave off this matter, and speake we of sir Tristram and of sir Palomides. When sir Tristram was come home unto Joyous-gard from his adventures, La beale Isoud told him of the great feast that should be at Pentecost next following, and there she told him how sir Launcelot had beene mist two yeare and more, and that while hee had beene out of his mind, and how he was holpen by the holy vessel of the sanggreall. 'And now, blessed bee God,' said La beale Isoud, 'hee is whole and sound, and come againe unto the court.' 'Thereof am I glad,' said sir Tristram, 'and now both ye and I will be at the feast.' 'Sir,' said La beale Isoud, 'and it please you I will not be there, for through me ye are marked of many good knights, and that causeth you to have much more labour for my sake then needeth you.' 'Then will I not be there,' said sir Tristram, 'but if yee be there.' 'God defend,' said La beale Isoud, 'for then shall I bee spoken of shame among all queenes and ladies of estate, for yee which are called one of the noblest knights of the world, and ye a knight of the round table, how may yee bee mist at that feast. What shall be said among the knights! See how sir Tristram hunteth and hawketh, and courteth¹ within the castle with his lady, and forsaketh his worship. Alas! shall some say, it is pittie that ever he was made knight, or that ever he should have the love of a lady. Also, what shall queenes and ladies say of me? It is pitie that I have my life, that I wil hold so noble a knight as yee are from your worship.' 'So God me helpe,' said sir Tristram to La beale Isoud, 'it is passing wel said of you, and nobly counselled. And so will I ride by my selfe alone on Tewesday next comming,' and no harneis of warre but my spear and my sword.'

¹ *Courleth.*—*Coure/h*, Caxton.

CHAP. XXV.—*How sir Tristram departed unarmed, and met with sir Palomides, and how they smote each other, and how sir Palomides forbore him.*

AND so when the day came, sir Tristram took his leave of his lady La beale Isoud, and shee sent with him foure knights, and within halfe a mile hee sent them againe. And within a mile after, sir Tristram saw before him where sir Palomides had stricken downe a knight, and had almost wounded him to death. Then sir Tristram repented him that he was not armed, and then hee hoked still. With that sir Palomides knew sir Tristram, and cried on high: 'Sir Tristram, now be wee met, for or wee depart we will redresse our old sores.' And therewithall sir Tristram made his horse to run with all his might, came he straight upon sir Palomides, and brake his speare upon him in an hundred peeces, and forthwith sir Tristram drew his sword, and then he turned his horse and strooke at sir Palomides sixe great strookes upon his helme. And then sir Palomides stood still, and beheld sir Tristram, and marvelled of his woodnesse and of his great folly. 'Ah! sir Tristram,' said sir Palomides, 'full well thou wotest I may not fight with thee for shame, for if I sley thee, the dishonour shall be mine. And now I require you tell me a question that I shall aske you.' 'Tel me what it is,' said sir Tristram, 'and I shall answere you the truth as God mee helpe.' 'I put the case,' said sir Palomides, 'that ye were armed at all points as well as I am, and I unarmed as ye be, what would ye doe to me now, by your true knighthood?' 'Ah!' said sir Tristram, 'now I understand thee well, and as God me blisse that shall I say shall not be said for feare that I have of thee. Wit thou well, sir Palomides, as at this time thou shouldest depart from me, for I would not have to doe with thee.' 'No more will I,' said sir Palomides, 'and therefore ride forth on thy way.' 'As for that, I may choose,' said sir Tristram, 'either to ride or to abide. But sir Palomides, I marvaile of one thing, that thou art so good a knight, that thou wilt not be christned, and thy brother sir Safire is christned.'

CHAP. XXVI.—*How that sir Tristram gat him harnis of a knight which was sore hurt, and how he overthrew sir Palomides.*

'AS for that,' said sir Palomides, 'I may not yet be christned, for one avow which I have made many yeares agoe, how bee it in my heart I beleeve in Jesu Christ and his milde mother Mary, but I have but one battaile to doe, and when that is done, I will be christned with a good will.' 'By my head,' said sir Tristram, 'as for one battaile, thou shalt seeke it

no longer. For God defend,' said sir Tristram, 'that through my default thou shouldest any longer live thus a Sarasin; for yonder is a knight which ye, sir Palomides, have hurt and smitten downe. Now helpe mee that I were armed in his armour, and I shall soone fullfill thine avowes.' 'As yee will,' said sir Palomides, 'so shall it bee.' So they rode both unto that knight, that sat on a bancke, and then sir Tristram saluted him, and he full weakly saluted him againe. 'Sir,' said sir Tristram, 'I require you that ye will tell me your name.' 'Sir,' said he, 'my name is sir Galleron of Galway, and am a knight of the round table.' 'So God me helpe!' said sir Tristram, 'I am right heave for your hurts; but this is all, I must pray you to lend me all your whole armour, for yee see that I am unarmed, and I must doe battaile with this knight,' 'Sir,' said sir Galleron, 'I require you tell me your name, and what is that knights name that hath beaten mee?' 'Sir, as for my name, it is sir Tristram de Liones, and as for the knights name that hath hurt you, it is sir Palomides.' Then as well as sir Galleron might, he armed sir Tristram. And then sir Tristram mounted upon his owne horse, and in his hand he gat sir Gallerons speare. And therewithall sir Palomides was ready, and so they came hurling together, and either smote other in the midst of their shields, and therewithall sir Palomides speare brake, and sir Tristram smote downe the horse; and therewith sir Tristram alighted and tied his horse to a tree.

CHAP. XXVII.—*How sir Tristram and sir Palomides fought long together, and after accorded; and how sir Tristram made him to be christned.*

THEY came together like two noble men which oft had beene well proved in battaile; but alway sir Palomides dread the might of sir Tristram, and therefore he suffered him not to breath him. Thus they fought more then two houres; and then sir Tristram wounded sir Palomides passing sore through the shoulder. And at the last sir Tristram smote sir Palomides sword out of his hand; and if sir Palomides had stooped for his sword, sir Tristram had slaine him. Then sir Palomides stood still, and beheld his sword with a full sorrowfull heart. 'How now?' said sir Tristram unto sir Palomides; 'now have I thee at advantage as thou hadst mee to day, but it shall never be said that sir Tristram shall slay any knight that is weaponlesse, therefore take thou thy sword, and let us make an end of this battel.' Then spake sir Palomides unto sir Tristram, 'As for to doe this battaile, I dare right well end it; but I have no lust to fight any more, and for this cause,' said sir Palomides, 'the offence that I have done unto you is not so great but, and

if it please you, wee may bee friends. Wherefore I require you, my lord sir Tristram, forgive mee all that I have offended unto you, and this day have me unto the next church, and first I will bee cleane confessed, and after that see you that I bee truly baptised; and then wee will ride al together unto the court of my lord king Arthur, so that wee may bee there at the feast of Pentecost.' 'Now take your horse,' said sir Tristram, 'and as ye have said, so shall it bee done, and all your evill will God forgive it you as I doe; and here within this mile is the suffrigan of Carleill, which shall give you the sacrament of baptisme.' Then the suffrigan commanded to fill a great vessell with water; and when he had halowed it, hee then confessed cleane sir Palomides; and sir Tristram and sir Galleron were his godfathers. And then soone after they departed, riding toward Camelot, where the noble king Arthur and queene Guenever were keeping a court royall of the noble knights of the world. And so the king and all the court were glad that sir Palomides was christned. And at the same feast in came sir Galahad and sat in the siege perilous; and so therewithall departed and disevered all the noble fellowship of knights of the round table, and sir Tristram returned againe toward Joyous-gard; and sir Palomides followed after the questing beast¹.

CHAP. XXVIII.—*How at the vigill of the feast of Pentecost, entred into the hall before king Arthur a damosell, and desired sir Launcelot for to come and dub a knight, and how he went with her.*

AT the vigill of Pentecost, when all the fellowship of the round table were come unto Camelot, entered into the hall a full faire gentlewoman on horsbacke; then shee there alighted and came before king Arthur and saluted him: 'Sir,' said shee, 'for God's sake, shew me where sir Launcelot is!' 'Yonder may yee see him,' said king Arthur. Then shee went unto sir Launcelot and said, 'sir Launcelot, I salute you on king Pelles behalfe, and I require you to come with me heereby into a forrest.' So sir Launcelot bad his squire to saddle his horse and bring his armour; and in all the hast he did his commandement. Then came the queene unto sir Launcelot, and said, 'Will ye leave us at this high feast?' 'Madame,' said the gentlewoman, 'wit yee well he shall be with you to morrow by dinner-time.' Right so departed sir Launcelot

¹ *The questing beast.*—This is the last mention of the questing, or glafisant beast; and we are left in the dark as to its subsequent history. It was first introduced to us as the object of pursuit to king Pellinore. See book i. p. 79. Palomides himself now loses his interest, and is introduced for little more than to fill up lists of names in tournaments, &c.

with the gentlewoman, and rode till they came into a forrest, and into a great valley, where he saw an abbey of nunnes; and there was a squier ready to open the gates. And so they entred in, and disceded from their horses, and there came a faire fellowship about sir Launcelot, and welcomed him, and were passing glad of his comming; and then they led him into the abbesse chamber, and unarmed him. Right so hee was ware lying upon a bed two of his cosins, sir Bors and sir Lionell, and then he awaked them; and when they saw him they made great joy. In the meane while, as they stood thus talking together, there came in twelve nunnes, which brought with them Galahad, the which was passing faire and well made, that unneth men in the world might not find his match; and all those ladies wept. 'Sir,' said the ladies, 'wee bring here this child, the which we have nourished, and wee pray you for to make him a knight; for of a more worthier mans hand may hee not receive the order of knighthood.' Then said sir Launcelot, 'Commeth this desire of himselfe?' Hee and all they said, 'Yea.' 'Then shall hee,' said sir Launcelot, 'receive the high order of knighthood as to morrow at the reverence of the high feast.' That night sir Launcelot had passing good cheere, and on the morrow at the houre of prime, at Galahads desire, he made him knight; and said, 'God make him a good man, for beautie faileth him not as any that liveth.'

CHAP. XXIX.—*How the letters were found written in the siege perilous, and of the mervailous adventure of the sword in a stone.*

'NOW, faire sir,' said sir Launce'ot, 'will ye come with me unto the court of my lord king Arthur?' 'Nay,' said hee, 'I will not goe with you as at this time.' Then he departed from them, and tooke his two cosins with him; and so they came unto Camelot by the houre of underne on Whitsunday. So when the king and all the knights were come from the service, the barons spied in the sieges of the round table all about written with letters of gold: and they came unto the siege perilous, where they found letters newly written, of gold, that said, 'Foure hundred winters and foure and fiftie accomplished after the passion of our Lord Jesu Christ ought this siege to be fulfilled.' Then they all said, 'This is a full mervailous thing, and an adventurous.' 'In the name of God, it seemeth me,' said sir Launcelot, 'this siege ought to bee fulfilled this same day, for this is the feast of Pentecost after the "foure hundred and foure and fiftie yeare," and if it would please all parties, I would that none of these letters were seene this day, till hee bee come that ought to achive this adventure.'

Then made they for to ordeine a cloth of silke for to cover these letters in the siege perillous. So as they stood speaking, in came a squier and said unto the king, 'Sir, there is heere beneath at the river a great stone which I saw fleete¹ above the water, and therin saw I a sword sticking.' Then said the king, 'I will see that mervaile.' So all the knights went with him, and when they came unto the river, they found there a stone fleeting, as it had beene of red marble, and therein stuck a faire and a rich sword, and in the pomell thereof were precious stones, wrought with subtill letters of gold. Then the barons red the letters, which said in this wise, 'Never shall man take mee hence, but onely hee by whom I ought to hang, and hee shall bee the best knight of the world.' When the king had seene these letters, he said unto sir Launcelot, 'Fair sir, this sword ought to bee yours, for I am sure that yee bee the best knight of the world.' Then sir Launcelot answered soberly, 'Certainly, sir, it is not my sword. Also, sir, wit yee well I have no hardinesse to set my hand to it, for it belongeth not to hang by my side. 'Also, who assaieth for to take that sword, and faileth of it, hee shall receive a wound by that sword that hee shall not be whole long after. And I will that ye wit that this same day will the adventures of the sancgreall (that is called the holy vessell) begin.'

CHAP. XXX.—*How sir Gawaine assaied to draw out the sword; and how an old man brought in sir Galahad.*

'NOW, my faire nephew,' said the king unto sir Gawaine, 'assay ye once for my love.' 'Sir,' said hee, 'save your grace, I shall not doe that.' 'Sir,' said the king, 'assay to take the sword at my command.' 'Sir,' said sir Gawaine, 'your command I will obey.' And therewithal he took the sword by the handell, but he might not stir it. 'I thanke you,' said king Arthur unto sir Gawaine. 'My lord sir Gawaine,' said sir Launcelot, 'now wit yee well this sword shall touch you so sore that ye shall will yee had never set your hand therto for the best castle of this realme.' 'Sir,' said sir Gawaine, 'I might not withstand mine uncles will and commandement.' But when king Arthur heard this, he repented it much; and then hee bad sir Percivale that hee should assay for his love. And he said, 'Gladly, for to beare sir Gawaine fellowship.' And therewithall he set his hand upon the sword and drew at it strongly; but he might not once moove it. Then wer there no more that durst be so hardy to set their hands thereto. 'Now may yee goe unto your dinner,' said sir Kay unto king Arthur; 'for

¹ *Fleete.*—Float.

a marvailous adventure have ye seene.' So the king and al his knights went unto the court; and every knight knew his owne place, and set them therein; and young men that were no knights¹ served them. So when they were served, and all the sieges fulfilled save onely the siege perillous, anon there befell a mervailous adventure, that all the doores and the windowes of the pallace shut by themselves, but for all that the hall was not greatly darked², and therewith they were al abashed both one and other. Then king Arthur spake first, and said, 'By God, faire fellows and lords, we have seene this day mervailles, but or night I suppose we shall see greater mervailles.' In the meane while came in a good old man and an ancient, clothed all in white; and there was no knight that knew from whence hee came. And with him hee brought a young knight, both on foote, in red armes, without sword or shield, save a scabbeard hanging by his side; and these words hee said, 'Peace bee with you, faire lords.' Then the old man said unto king Arthur, 'Sir, I bring you heere a young knight that is of kings linage, and of the kindred of Joseph of Arimathy, whereby the mervailles of this court and of strang realmes shall be fully accomplished.'

CHAP. XXXI.—*How the old man brought sir Galahad unto the siege perillous and set him therein, and how all the knights mervailed thereof.*

THE king was right glad of his words, and said unto the good man, 'Sir, yee bee right hartely wellcome, and the young knight with you.' Then the old man made the young knight to unarme him; and anon he brought him unto the siege perillous, where beside sate sir Launcelot. And the good old man lift up the cloth, and found there letters that said, 'This is the siege of sir Galahad the good knight.' 'Sir,' said the old man, 'wit yee well this place is yours.' And then hee set him downe surely in that siege. So the good man departed, and there met him twentie noble squiers, and so they tooke their horses and went their way. Then all the knights of the round table mervailed them greatly of sir Galahad, that hee durst sit there in that siege perillous, and was so tender of age. Then sir Launcelot beheld his sonne, and had great joy of him. Then sir Bors told his fellowses, 'Upon paine of my life, this young knight shall come unto great worship.' This noyse was great in all the court, so that it came to the queene. Then shee had great mervaille what knight it might bee that durst

¹ *That were no knights.—That were knyghtes, Caxton.*

² *Not greatly darked.—We are, of course, to suppose that the windows had shutters hich closed.*

adventure him to sit in the siege perilous. Many said unto the queene that hee resembled much unto sir Launcelot. So when dinner was done the king went unto the siege perilous and lift up the cloath, and found there the name of sir Galahad, and then hee shewed it unto sir Gawaine, and said, 'Faire nephew, now have wee among us sir Galahad the good knight that shall worship¹ us all, and upon paine of my life he shall achieve the sancgreall, as sir Launcelot hath done us to understand.' Then came king Arthur unto sir Galahad, and tooke him by the hand, and went downe from the pallace to shew sir Galahad the adventure of the stone.

CHAP. XXXII.—*How king Arthur shewed the stone hoving on the water to sir Galahad, and how he drew out the sword.*

THE queene heard thereof, and came after with many ladies, and shewed them the stone which hoved on the water. 'Sir,' said the king to sir Galahad, 'here is a great mervaille as ever I saw, and right good knights have assayed and failed.' 'Sir,' said sir Galahad, 'that is no mervaille, for this adventure is not theirs but mine, and for the surety of this sword I brought none with mee, for here by my side hangeth the scabard.' And anon he laid his hand on the sword, and lightly drew it out of the stone, and then he put it into the scabard, and said unto the king, 'Now it goeth better then it did aforehand.' Therewith the king and all other espied where came riding downe the river a lady on a white palfrey toward them, and she saluted the king and the queene, and asked if sir Launcelot was there. And then sir Launcelot answered himselfe, 'I am here, faire lady.' Then she said, all weeping, 'Your great doings be changed sith to day in the morning.' 'Damosell, why say yee so?' said sir Launcelot. 'I say you sooth,' said the damosell, 'for yee were this day the best knight in the world, but ye shall not weene from henceforth that ye bee the best knight of the world.' 'As touching that,' said sir Launcelot, 'I know wel I was never the best.' 'Yes,' said the damosell, 'that were ye, and yet are of any sinful man of the world; and, sir king, Nacien the hermit sendeth thee word that to thee shall befall the greatest worship that ever befell king in Brittain, for this day the sancgreall appeared in this thy house, and fed thee and all thy fellowship of the round table.' And so the damosell tooke her leave, and departed the same way that she came.

¹ *Worship.*—Give us honour.

CHAP. XXXIII.—*How king Arthur had all the knights together for to just in the meadow beside Camelot or they departed.*

‘NOW,’ said the king, ‘I am sure, at this quest of the sanggreall, shall all ye of the round table depart; therefore I will see you all whole together in the meadow of Camelot, for to just and to turney.’ And unto that counsaile and at the kings request they accorded all, and tooke on their hearneis that longed to justing. But all the meaning of the king was to see sir Galahad proved, for the king deemed hee should not lightly come againe unto the court after his departing. So were they al assembled in the meadow, both more and lesse. Then sir Galahad, by the prayer of the king and the queene, did upon him a noble jesserance¹, and also hee did on his helme, but shield would hee take none, for no prair of the king. There sir Galahad dressed him in the midst of the meadow, and within a little while he had throwen downe many good knights of the round table, save twaine, that was sir Launcelot and sir Percivale.

CHAP. XXXIV.—*How the queene desired to see sir Galahad, and how, after, all the knights were replenished with the holy sanggreall, and how they avowed the enquest of the same.*

THEN the king, at the queenes request, made him to alight and to unlace his helme, that queene Guenever might see him in the visage. So a lady that stood by the queene said: ‘Madame, for Gods sake, ought hee of right to bee so good a knight?’ ‘Yee, forsooth,’ said the queene, ‘for he is of all parties come of the best knights of the world, and of the highest linage, for sir Launcelot is come but of the eight degree from our Lord Jesus Christ, and sir Galahad is of the ninth degree from our Lord Jesu Christ, therefore I dare well say that they be the greatest gentlemen of all the world.’ And then the king and all the estate went home unto Camelot, and so went to even-song to the great minster; and so after that they went to supper. Then anon they heard cracking and crying of thunder; and in the midst of the blast entred a sunne beame more clear by seaven times then ever they saw day, and all they were alighted of the grace of the holy Ghost. Then there entred into the hall the holy grale covered with white samite, but there was none that might see it, nor who beare it, and there was all the hall fulfilled with good odours, and every knight had such meate and drinke as hee best loved in this

¹ *Jesserance*.—A jacket of light plate armour.

world; and when the holy grale had beene borne through the hall, then the holy vessel departed sudenly, that they wist not where it became. Then had they breath to speak, and then the king yeelded thanks unto God of his grace that hee had sent them. 'Now,' said sir Gawaine, 'we have beene served this day of what meats and drinckes we thought on, but one thing beguiled us, we might not see the holy grale, it was so preciousely covered, wherefore I will make heere avow, that to morrow, without any longer abiding, I shall labour in the quest of the sancgreall; and if I may not speed, I shall returne againe, as hee that may not bee against the will of our Lord Jesu Christ.' When they of the round table heard sir Gawaine say so, they arose, the most part of them, and avowed the same. And anon, as king Arthur heard this he was greatly displeased, for hee wist wel that they might not gainesay their avowes. 'Alas!' said king Arthur unto sir Gawaine, 'yee have nigh slaine me with the vow and promise that yee have made; for I am sure that all shall never meete more in this world, for there shall many die in the quest, and so it forethinketh¹ me a little; wherefore it shall grieve me right sore the separation of this fellowship, for I have had an old custome to have them in my fellowship.'

CHAP. XXXV.—*How great sorrow was made of the king and the queene and ladies for the departing of the knights, and how they departed.*

AND therewith the teares fell into his eyes, and he said: 'Sir Gawaine, sir Gawaine, yee have set me in great sorrow, for I have great doubt that my true fellowship shall never meete more heere againe.' When the queene, ladies, and gentlewomen wist these tidings, they had such sorrow and heavinesse, that no tongue might tell it, for those knights had holden them in honour and charitie, but among all other, queene Guenever made great sorrow. 'I mervaile,' said shee, 'my lord will suffer them to depart from him.' And then they went to rest them; and in the honour of the highnesse of sir Galahad, hee was led into king Arthurs chamber, and there he rested him in his owne bed; and as soone as it was day light the king arose, for hee had taken no rest of all that night for sorrow. Then went hee unto sir Gawaine and unto sir Launcelot, that were risen for to heere masse. And then the king and the queene went to the minster. So anon sir Launcelot and sir Gawaine commanded their men to bring their armes; and when they were all armed save their shields and their helmes, then they came to their fellowship, which all were ready in the

¹ *Forethinketh*.—Repenta.

same wise for to goe to the minster to heere their service. Then after the service was done, the king would wit how many had taken the quest of the sancgreall, and to account them hee praied them all. Then found they by tale an hundred and fiftie, and all were knights of the round table; and then they put on their helmes and departed, and recomanded them all wholly unto the queene, and there was weeping and great sorrow. Then the queene departed into her chamber, so that no man should perceive her great sorrowes. Right so departed sir Launcelot, and found his fellowship that abod his comming; and so they mounted upon their horses, and rode through the streetes of Camelot, and there was weeping of the rich and poore, and the king returned away, and might not speake for weeping. So within a while they came to a citie and a castle; and the lord of that castle was an old man that hight Vagon, and hee was a good man of his living, and set open the gates, and made them all the good cheere that hee might. And so on the morrow they were al accorded that they should depart everyeach from other: and then they departed, and every knight tooke the way that him best liked.

CHAP. XXXVI.—*How sir Galahad gat him a shield, and how they sped that presumed to take downe that shield.*

NOW rideth sir Galahad yet without shield; and at the fourth day after even-song¹ hee came to a white abbey², and there he was received with great reverence, and led to a chamber; and there hee was unarmed, and then was hee ware of two knights of the round table, one was king Bagdemagus, and that other was sir Uwaine. And when they saw him, they went unto him and made of him great solace, and so they went to supper. 'Sirs,' said sir Galahad, 'what adventure brought you hither?' 'Sir,' said they, 'it is told us that within this place is a shield that no man may beare about his necke but if that he be mischieved or dead within three daies, or else maimed for ever.' 'Sir,' said king Bagdemagus, 'and I may not achieve the adventure of this shield, yee shall take it upon you, for I am sure yee shall not faile.' 'Sir,' said sir Galahad, 'I agree right well thereto, for I have no shield.' So on the morrow they arose and heard masse. Then king Bagdemagus asked where the adventurous shield was; anon a munke led him behind an alter, where the shield hung as white as any snow, but in the mids was a red crosse. 'Sir,' said the munke, 'this shield ought not to be hanged about no knights necke, but

¹ *After even-song.*—Vespers or even-song began at four o'clock in the afternoon.

² *A white abbey.*—i. e. an abbey of white or Augustine monks.

hee bee the worthiest knight of the world, and therefore I counsaile you knights to bee well advised.' 'Well,' said king Bagdemagus, 'I wote well that I am not the best knight of the world, but yet shall I assay to beare it ;' and so he beare it out of the ministry¹, and then he said unto sir Galahad, 'If it will please you, I pray you abide here still, till yee know how I shall speed.' Then king Bagdemagus tooke with him a squier, the which should bring tidings unto sir Galahad how hee sped. Then when they had ridden a two mile, and came in a faire valey before an hermitage, then they saw a goodly knight come from that partie in white armour, horse and all, and hee came as fast as his horse might runne, with his speare in the rest, and king Bagdemagus dressed his speare against him, and brake it upon the white knight. But the other strooke him so hard, that hee brake the mayles, and thrust him through the right shoulder, for the shield covered him not as at that time, and so hee beare him from his horse; and therewith he alighted and tooke the white shield from him, saying, 'Knight, thou hast done thy selfe great folly, for this shield ought not to bee borne but by him that shall have no peere that liveth.' And then hee came to king Bagdemagus squier, and said, 'Beare this shield unto the good knight sir Galahad that thou left in the abbey, and greete him well from mee.' Then the squier went unto king Bagdemagus, and asked him whether he were sore wounded or not. 'I am sore wounded,' said he, 'and full hardly I shall escape from the death.' Then he fet² his horse, and brought him with great paine to an abbey; then was he taken downe softly, and unarmed, and laid in a bed, and his wound was looked unto, for hee lay there long, and escaped hard with his life.

CHAP. XXXVII.—*How sir Galahad departed with the shield, and how king Evelake had received the shield of Joseph of Aramathy.*

'SIR Galahad,' said the squier, 'that knight that wounded king Bagdemagus sendeth you greeting, and bad that yee should beare this shield, wherethrough great adventures shall befall.' 'Now blessed bee God and fortune,' said sir Galahad. And sir Uwayne said he would beare him fellowship, if it pleased him. 'Sir,' said sir Galahad, 'that may ye not, for I must go alone, save this squire that shall beare mee fellowship.' Then within a while came sir Galahad there as the white knight abode him by the hermitage, and everyeach saluted other curteously. 'Sir,' said the knight, 'it befell, after the passion of

¹ *The ministry.*—The minister, or monastery.

² *Fet.*—Fetched.

our Lord Jesu Christ thirtie yeare, that Joseph of Aramathy, the gentle knight that tooke downe our Lord from the crosse, and at that time hee departed from Jerusalem with a great part of his kindred with him, and so they laboured till they came to a citie that hight Sarras¹. And at that same houre that Joseph came unto Sarras, there was a king that hight² Evelake, that had great warre against the Sarasins, and in especiall against one Sarasin, the which was king Evelakes cosin, a rich king and a mighty, the which marched³ nigh this land, and his name was called Tollome le Feintes. So upon a day these two met to doe battaile.

'Then Joseph, the son of Joseph of Aramathy, went unto king Evelake, and told him that he would be discomfited and slaine but if he left his beleve of the ould law and beleve upon the new law. And then he shewed him the right beleve of the Holy Trinity, the which he agreed with al his hart, and ther this shield was made for king Evelak, in the name of him that died upon the crosse; and then through his good beleve hee had the better of king Tollome. Then soone after there fell a great mervaile, that the crosse of the shield at one time vanished away that no man wist where it became. And then was the king Evelake baptised, and for the most part all the people of that citie. So soone after Joseph would depart, and king Evelake would go with him whether he would go or not; and so by fortune they came into this land, which at that time was called Great Brittain, and there they found a great felon panim that put Joseph in prison. And so by fortune tidings came unto a worthy man that hight Mondrames, and hee assembled all his people; and so he came into the land of Great Brittain, and therewith delivered Joseph out of prison. And after that, all the people were turned to the christian faith.

CHAP. XXXVIII.—*How Joseph made a crosse upon the white shield with his blood, and how sir Galahad was by a munke brought to a tombe.*

'NOT long after that, Joseph was laid in his death bed, and when king Evelake saw that, he made great sorrow, and said: "For thy love I have left my cuntry, and sith thou shalt out of this world, leave mee some token that I may thinke on thee." "That will I doe right gladly," said Joseph. "Now bring me the shield that I tooke⁴ you when ye went into the battaile

¹ *Sarras*.—Maundevile gives the name Sarras to one of the great cities of Media, but I have thought it not impossible that it may here be a corruption of Charræ, the Haran of Scripture, and that the legend of the St. Graal may have some connection with the Sabeian superstitions.

² *Hight*.—Was called.

³ *Marched*.—Bordered upon.

⁴ *Tooke*.—Gave.

against king Tollome." Then Joseph bled sore at the nose that hee might not by no meanes bee stenchted, and there upon that same shield he made a crosse of his owne blood. "Now may yee see a remembrance that I love you, for yee shall never see this shield but that ye shall thinke on mee, and it shall be alwayes as fresh as it is now, and never shall no man beare this shield about his necke but hee shall repent it, unto the time that sir Galahad the good knight beare it, and the last of my linnage shall have it about his necke, the which shall do many marvailous deeds." And then the white knight vanished away. Anon as the squire had heard these words, he alighted from his hackney, and kneeled downe at sir Galahads feete, and besought him that hee might goe with him till that hee had made him knight. And anon as sir Galahad was alighted, there was a munke brought him unto a tombe in a church yard, where as was such a noyse, that who heard it should very nigh be mad or leese his strength. 'And, sir,' said he, 'I deeme it is a feend.'

CHAP. XXXIX.—*Of the mervaille that sir Galahad heard and saw in the tombe, and how he made Melias knight.*

'NOW leade mee thither,' said sir Galahad. And so they did, all armed save his helme. Then sir Galahad heard a great noyse, and a voyce saying pittiously that all men might heare it: 'Sir Galahad, the servant of God, come thou not neere me, for thou shalt make me goe againe there where I have beene so long.' But sir Galahad was nothing afraid, but quickly lift up the stone, and there came out a foule smoke, and after hee saw the foulest figure that ever hee saw in the likenesse of a man, and then hee blessed him, and wist well that it was a feend of hell. Then heard hee a voice, that said, 'Galahad, I see there about thee so many angels that my power may not hurt thee.' Right so sir Galahad saw a body all armed lye in the tombe, and beside him there lay a sword. 'Now, faire brother,' said sir Galahad, 'let us remove this cursed body, for it is not worthy to lye in the church yard, for hee was a false christian man.' And therewith they all departed, and went to the abbey. So sir Galahad rested him there all that night; and on the morrow he made the squire knight, and asked him his name, and of what kindred he was come. 'Sir,' said he, 'men call me Melias de Lile, and I am the sonne of the king of Denmarke: but, sir, sith ye have made mee knight, ye must of right graunt me my first desire that is reasonable.' 'Ye say sooth,' said sir Galahad. Then said sir Melias, 'That ye will suffer me to ride with you in this quest of the sancgreall, till that some adventure depart us.'

'I graunt you,' said sir Galahad. Then men brought sir

Melias his armour, and his speare, and his horse, and so sir Galahad and he rode forth all that weeke ere they found any adventure. And then upon a Munday in the morning, as they were departed from an abbey, they came unto a crosse which departed two waies, and on that crosse were letters written that said thus: 'Now, yee knights arraunt, the which goeth for to seeke adventures, see here two waies. On the left hand, thou shalt not there lightly win prowesse, for thou shalt in this way be soone assayed.' 'Sir,' said sir Melias unto sir Galahad, 'if it liketh you to suffer me for to take the way on the left hand, tell it me, for there I shall well prove my strength.' 'It were better,' said sir Galahad, 'that yee rode not that way, for I deeme I should better escape in that way then ye.' 'Nay, I pray you, my lord, let me have that adventure!' 'Take it in Gods name,' said sir Galahad.

CHAP. XL.—*Of the adventure that sir Melias had, and how sir Galahad revenged him, and how sir Melias was carried into an abbey.*

AND then sir Melias roode into an old forrest, and therein he rode two daies and more, and then hee came into a faire meadow, and there was a faire lodge of bowes; and then hee espied in that lodge a chaire, wherein was a crowne of golde subtilly wrought, also there was clothes covered upon the earth, and many delitious meats were set thereon. Sir Melias had no hunger, but of the crowne of gold hee tooke much keepe, and therewith hee tooke it up and rode his way with it. And anon he saw a knight come riding after him, that said, 'Knight, set downe that crowne which is not yours, and therefore defend you.' Then sir Melias blessed him, and said, 'Faire Lord of heaven, helpe and save thy new made knight.' And then they let their horses runne as fast as they might, so that the other knight smote sir Melias through the hawberke and through the left side, that hee fell to the earth nigh dead. And then hee tooke the crowne and went his way, and sir Melias lay still, and had no power to stirre.

In the meane while by fortune there came sir Galahad, and found him there in perill of death, and then he said, 'Ah! sir Melias, who hath wounded you? therfore it had beene better to have riden that other way.' And when sir Melias heard him speake, hee said, 'Sir, for Gods love, let me not die in this forrest, but beare me unto the abbey here beside, that I may be confessed and have my rights.' 'It shall be done,' said sir Galahad; 'but where is he that hath wounded you?' With that sir Galahad heard in the leaves cry on high, 'Knight, keepe the from mee.' 'Ah! sir,' said sir Melias, 'beware, for that is hee that hath slaine me.' Sir Galahad answered, 'Sir

knight, come on your perill.' Then either dressed them to other, and came together as fast as their horses might runne, and sir Galahad smote him so that his speare went through his shoulder, and smote him downe of his horse, and in the falling sir Galahads speare brake. With that came out of the leaves another knight, and brake a speare upon sir Galahad or hee might turne him. And then sir Galahad drew out his sword, and smote off the left arme of him, so that it fell unto the ground, and then hee fled, and sir Galahad followed fast after him. And then hee returned againe unto sir Melias, and there he alighted and dressed him softly upon his horse before him, and so brought him to an abbey, and there he unarmed him and brought him to his chamber, and then hee asked his Saviour¹. Then came there an old monke, which sometime had beene a knight, and beheld sir Melias; and anon he ransacked² him, and hee said unto sir Galahad, 'I shall heale him of his wound, by the grace of God, within the space of seven weekes.' Then was sir Galahad glad, and unarmed him, and said hee would abide ther three dayes.

CHAP. XLI.—*How sir Galahad departed, and how he was commaunded to goe unto the castle of Maidens for to destroy the wicked custome.*

- * 'NOW will I depart,' said sir Galahad, 'for this knight and I were in the same quest of the sanggreall.' 'Sir,' said a good man, 'for his sinne hee was thus wounded; and I mer-vaile,' said the good man, 'how ye durst take upon you so rich a thing as the high order of knighthood without cleane confession, and that was the cause yee were so bitterly wounded. For the way on the right hand betokneth the hie way of our Lord Jesu Christ, and the other way betokneth the way of sinners and misbeleEVERS. And this holy knight sir Galahad, the which fought with the two knights, and the two knights doth signifie the two deadly sinnes which were entierly in the knight sir Melias, and they might not withstand you, for yee are without deadly sinne.' Now departed sir Galahad from thence, and betooke them all unto God. Sir Melias said, 'My lord sir Galahad, as soone as I may ride I shall seek you.' 'God send you good helpe,' said sir Galahad. And so hee tooke his horse, and departed, and rode many journeys forward and backward, as adventure would leade him; and at the last it hapned him to depart from a place or a castle that was named Abblasour, and hee had not heard no masse, the which hee was alwayes wont to heare or that hee departed out of any castle or place.

¹ *His Saviour*.—i. e. the sacrament.

² *Ransack'd*.—i. e. searched his wounds.

and kept that for a custome. Then sir Galahad came unto a mountaine where hee found an old chappel, and found there nobody, for all was desolate. And there hee kneeled before the alter, and besought God of holsome counsaile; so, as hee praied, hee heard a voice that said thus, 'Go now, thou adventurous knight, unto the castle of Maidens, and there doe thou away all the wicked customes.'

CHAP. XLII.—*How sir Galahad fought with the knights of the castle, and destroyed the wicked custome.*

THEN as sir Galahad heard this, hee thanked God, and tooke his horse, and hee had not ridden but halfe a mile. he saw in a valey before him a strong castle with deepe ditches, and there ranne beside a faire river, the which hight Sevarne¹; and there hee met with a man of great age, and either saluted other, and sir Galahad asked him what was the castles name. 'Fairst sir,' said he, 'it is the castle of Maidens.' Then looked sir Galahad on his armour that nothing failed him; and anon there met him seven maidens, that said unto him, 'Sir knight, yee ride here in a great folly, for yee have the waters for to passe over.' 'Why should I not passe here over this water?' said sir Galahad. And so he departed away from them, and then he met with a squier that said, 'Sir knight, those knights in the castle defie you, and forbid you that yee goe no further, till that they wit what yee would.' Then the squier entred into the castle; and anon after there came out of the castle seven knights, and all were bretheren; and when they saw sir Galahad, they cried, 'Knight, keepe thee, for we assure thee nothing but death.' 'Why,' said sir Galahad, 'will yee all have to doe with me at once?' 'Yea,' said they all, 'for therto maist thou trust.' Then sir Galahad put forth his speare, and smote the foremost to the earth, that almost hee had broken his necke; and therewith all the other smot on his shield great strookes, so that all their speares brake. Then sir Galahad made them to forsake the field, and chaced them untill they entred into the castle, and so passed through the castle at another gate. And there met sir Galahad an old man clothed in religious clothing, the which said to him, 'Sir, have heere the keyes of the castle.' Then sir Galahad opened the gates, and saw so much people in the streete, that hee might not number them; and they said, 'Sir, yee bee welcome, for long have wee abidden heere our deliverance.' And then there came unto him a gentlewoman, and said, 'These knights be fled, but they will come againe this night, and here begin againe their evill and wicked custome.'

¹ *Sevarne*.—The river Severn must be meant; but this will not at all suit the ordinary explanation of the castle of Maidens. See book ii. p. 259.

'What will yee that I shall do?' said sir Galahad. 'Sir,' said the gentlewoman, 'that yee send after all those knights hether that hold their lands of this castle, and make them swere for to use the custome that were used heretofore of old time.' 'I will well,' said sir Galahad. And then the gentlewoman brought him an horne of ivory, richly bounden with gold, and said, 'Sir, blow yee this horne, which will be heard two mile about this castle.' Then came there a priest unto sir Galahad, and said, 'Sir, it is past a seaven yeare that these seven brethren came into this castle, and herborowed¹ with the lord of this castle, which hight the duke Lianour; and hee was lord of all this countrey. And so when they espied the dukes daughter that was a faire woman, then they slew the duke and his eldest sonne, and they tooke the maiden and the treasour of the castle.' 'Now,' said sir Galahad, 'is shee heere for whom this castle was lost?' 'Nay,' said the priest, 'shee died within three nights after that shee was thus enforced: and sithence have they kept her young sister, which endureth great paine, with moe other ladies.' By this were the knights of the countrey come, and then hee made them to doe homage and fealty to the dukes daughter; and set them in great ease of heart. And on the morrow there came one unto sir Galahad, and told him how sir Gawaine and sir Gareth and sir Uwaine had slaine the seven brethren. 'I suppose well,' said sir Galahad; and then he tooke his armour and his horse, and commended them to God.

CHAP. XLIII.—*How sir Gawaine came unto the abbey for to follow after sir Galahad, and how he was shriven unto an hermite.*

NOW after that sir Gawaine was departed, hee rode many divers journeys, and so at the last hee came unto the abbey where as sir Galahad had the white shield. And there sir Gawaine learned the very way for to follow after sir Galahad, and so he rode unto the abbey where as sir Melias lay sicke; and there sir Melias told sir Gawaine of the mervailous adventure that sir Galahad had done. Right as they stood thus talking together, there came in riding sir Gareth; and then they made great joy either of other. And on the morrow they heard masse, and so departed. And by the way they met with sir Uwaine le Avoutres; and there sir Uwaine told sir Gawaine how hee had met with none adventure siththence hee departed from the court. So they departed, and rode by fortune till they came unto the castle of Maidens; and there the seaven brethren espied the three knights. And therewith the seven knights set upon the three knights; and by fortune sir Gawaine slew one

¹ *Herborowed*.—Lodged.

of the seaven brethren, and each of his fellowes slew another, and so slew the remnant. And then they tooke their way under the castle; and there they lost the way that sir Galahad rode, and every one of them departed from other. And sir Gawaine rode till he came to an hermitage, and there sir Gawaine asked harbour¹ for charitie, and the good man graunted it him gladly. Then the good man asked him what hee was, and from whence he came. 'Sir,' said he, 'I am a knight of king Arthurs court, that am in the quest of the sancgreall, and my name is sir Gawaine.' 'Sir,' said the good man, 'I will wit how it standeth betweene God and you.' 'Sir,' said sir Gawaine, 'I will with a good will shew you my life and it please you.' And there hee told the good man how a munke of an abbey called him a wicked knight. 'He might right well say it,' said the good man; 'for ye have lived mischievously many winters. And the noble knight sir Galahad never sinned; and that is the cause he shall achieve whersoever he goeth, that ye nor none such shal not attaine, nor none of your fellowship; for yee have used the most untruest life that ever I heard knight live. Also I may say to you, the castle of Maidens betokeneth the good soules that were in prison afore the incarnation of Christ; and the seaven knights betoken the seaven deadly sinnes which reigned that time in the world. Now sir Gawaine,' said the good man, 'thou must doe penance for thy sinnes.' 'Nay,' said sir Gawaine, 'I may doe no penance, for wee knights adventurous often suffer great woe and paine.' And on the morrow sir Gawaine departed from the hermite, and betooke him unto God. And by adventure hee met with sir Aglovale and sir Griflet, two knights of the round table. And they two had riden foure days without finding of any adventure; and at the fift day they departed, and every each held as fell them by adventure.

CHAP. XLIV.—*How sir Galahad met with sir Launcelot and with sir Percivale, and smote them both downe, and departed from them.*

SO when sir Galahad was departed from the castle of Maidens, he rode till he came unto a wast forrest, and there hee met with sir Launcelot and sir Percivale, but none of them both knew him not, for hee was new disguised. Right so sir Launcelot his father dressed his speare and brake it upon his sonne sir Galahad and sir Galahad smote him so hard againe, that he smote downe both horse and man; and then he drew his sword and dressed him unto sir Percivale, and smote him so on the helme that it rove the coyfe of steele, and if the sword had not swerved, sir Percivale had beene slaine, and

¹ Harbour.—Lodging.

with the strooke he fell out of his saddle. These justes were done before the hermitage, where a recluse dwelled: and when she saw sir Galahad ride, shee said, 'God bee with thee, the best knight of the world! Ah certainly,' said she all aloud, that sir Launcelot and sir Percivale might heare it, 'and yonder two knights had knowne thee as well as I doe, they would not have encountred with thee.' When sir Galahad heard her say so, hee was sore adread to be knowne. Therewithall hee smote his horse with his spurrs, and rode a great pace froward them¹. Then perceived they both that it was sir Galahad, and up they gat on their horses, and rode fast after him; but within a while he was out of their sight. And then they turned againe with an heavie cheare. When sir Percivale came unto the recluse, she knew him well enough, and in likewise shee knew sir Launcelot. But sir Launcelot rode overthwart and endlong in a wild forrest, and held no path but as wild adventure led him, and at the last he came unto a stone crosse, which departed two wayes in wast land. And by the crosse was a ston that was of marble; but it was so darke that sir Launcelot might not well know what it was. Then sir Launcelot looked by him, and saw an old chappell, and there hee wend to have found people. And so sir Launcelot tied his horse to a tree, and then hee went unto the chappell doore, and found it wasted and broken. And within he found a faire alter, full richly arrayed with cloth of silk, and there stood a faire candlestick which beare six great candels, and the candlestick was of silver. And when sir Launcelot saw this light, hee had a great will for to enter into the chappell, but hee could find no place where hee might enter. Then hee returned, and came againe to his horse and laid him downe to sleepe upon his shield before the crosse.

CHAP. XLV.—*How sir Launcelot, halfe sleeping and halfe waking, saw a sicke man borne in a horse litter, and how hee was healed with the sancgreall.*

AND so hee fell on sleepe, and halfe waking and halfe sleeping he saw come by him two palfries, both faire and white, the which beare a litter, therein lying a sicke knight; and when he was nigh the crosse, he there abode still. And sir Launcelot heard him say, 'Oh, sweete Lord, when shall the holy vessell come by me, wherethrough I shall be blessed? for I have endured thus long for little trespassse.' And thus a great while complained the knight, and allwaies sir Launcelot heard it. With that sir Launcelot saw the candlestick with the sixe tapers come before the crosse, but he could see nobody

¹ *Froward them.*—In a direction away from them.

that brought it; also there came a table of silver, and the holy vessell of the sancgreal, the which sir Launcelot had seene before that time in king Petchours house. And therewithall the sicke knight set him upright, and held up both his hands; and therewith upon his hands and upon his knees he went so nigh that he touched the holy vessell and kissed it, and anon he was hole; and then he said, 'Lord God, I thank thee, for I am healed of this malady.' Soe when the holy vessell had beene there a great while, it went unto the chappell againe with the candlestick and the light, so that sir Launcelot wist not where it became, for he was overtaken with sinne, that hee had no power to arise against the holy vessell, wherefore afterward many men said of him shame; but hee tooke repentance afterward. Then the sicke knight dressed him upright, and kissed the crosse. Then anon his squire brought him his armes, and asked his lord how he did. 'Certainly,' said hee, 'I thanke God right heartily, for through the holy vessell I am healed; but I have right great mervaille of this sleeping knight, which hath had neither grace nor power to awake during the time that this holy vessell hath beene here present.' 'Sir,' said the squire, 'here I have brought you all your armes save your helme and your sword, and therefore by mine assent now may ye take this knights helme and his sword;' and so he did. And when he was cleane armed, he tooke sir Launcelots horse, for he was better then his owne. And so they departed from the crosse.

CHAP. XLVI.—*How a voice speake to sir Launcelot, and how hee missed his horse and his helme, and after went on foote.*

THEN anon sir Launcelot awaked, and set himselfe upright, and bethought him what hee had there seene, and whether it were dreames or not. Right so he heard a voice that said 'Sir Launcelot, go thou from hence, and withdraw thee from this holy place.' And when sir Launcelot heard this, he was passing heavy, and wist not what to doe. Then sir Launcelot went to the crosse, and found that his helme, his sword, and his horse was taken away; and then hee called himselfe a very wretch, and most unhappy of all knights. And there he said, 'My sinne and my wretchednesse hath brought me unto great dishonour; for when I sought worldly adventures and worldly desires, never was I discomfited in no quarel, were it right or wrong. And now I take upon mee the adventures of holy things, mine old sinne hindreth mee, and also shameth mee, so that I had no power to stire nor to speake when the holy blood appeared before mee.' So thus hee sorrowed till it was day, and heard the foules of the ayre sing; then was hee

somewhat comforted. Then hee departed from the crosse on foot into a wild forrest; and so by prime¹ hee came unto an high mountaine, and there he found an hermitage, and an hermite therin which was going to masse. So when masse was done, sir Launcelot called the hermite to him, and praied him for charitie to here his confession. 'With a good wil,' said the good man. 'Sir,' said he, 'bee yee of king Arthurs court, and of the noble fellowship of the round table?' 'Yee forsooth, and my name is sir Launcelot du Lake, which hath beene right well said off, and greatly magnified; and now it is so, my good fortune is changed, for I am the most wretch and caytife of the world.' Then the hermit beheld him, and had great mervaile how hee was so sore abashed. 'Sir,' said the hermit, 'ye ought to thanke God more then any knight living; for he hath caused you to have more worldly worship then any knight that now liveth; and for your presumption to take upon you in deadly sinne for to bee in his presence, where his flesh and his blood was, that caused you yee might not see it with your worldly eye. For he will not appeere where such sinners bee; and your strength and manhood will little availe you and² God be against you.'

CHAP. XLVII.—*How sir Launcelot was shriven of his sinnes, and what sorrow he made, and of the good ensamples that were shewed him.*

THEN sir Launcelot wept, and made full heavy cheere, and said, 'Now I know well ye tell me truth.' 'Sir,' said the good man, 'hide none old sinne from me.' Then sir Launcelot told that good man all his life, and how hee had loved a queene unmeasurably many years. Then sir Launcelot said, 'I pray you counsaile me.' 'I will counsaile you,' said the hermit; 'if yee will ensure mee that yee will never come in that queenes fellowship as much as yee may forbear.' And then sir Launcelot promised the hermit by his faith that hee would no more come in her company. 'Looke that your heart and your mouth accord,' said the good man, 'and I shall ensure you that yee shall have more worship then ever yee had.' Then the good man enjoyned sir Launcelot such penance as hee might doe; and so hee assoyled³ sir Launcelot, and prayed him to abide with him all that day. 'I will well,' said sir Launcelot, 'for I have neither helme, nor horse, nor sword.' 'As for that,' said the good man, 'I shall helpe you or to morrow at even of an horse and all that belongeth unto you.' And then sir Launcelot repented him greatly.

¹ *Prime*.—Six o'clock in the morning.

² *And*.—If.

³ *Assoyled*.—Gave absolution to.

CHAP. XLVIII.—*How sir Percivale came unto a recluse and asked her counsaile, and how she told him that she was his aunt.*

NOW, saith the tale, that when sir Launcelot was ridden after sir Galahad his sonne, sir Percivale returned againe unto the recluse, where he deemed to have tidings of that knight which sir Launcelot followed; and so hee kneeled at her window, and anon the recluse opened it, and asked sir Percivale what hee would. 'Madame,' said hee, 'I am a knight of king Arthurs court, and my name is sir Percivale de Galis.' So when the recluse heard his name, shee made passing great joy of him, for greatly she loved him before all other knights of the world, for shee was his aunt. So on the morrow sir Percivale went unto the recluse, and asked her if shee knew that knight with the white shield. 'Ah! sir Percivale,' said she, 'would yee fight with him? I see well yee have great will to bee slaine as your father was through outrageousnesse.' 'Madame,' said sir Percivale, 'it seemeth by your words that yee know me.' 'Yee,' said shee, 'I well ought to know you, for I am your aunt, although I bee in a priory place; for I was sometime called the queene of the wast lands, and I was called the queene of most riches in the world, and it pleased me never so much my riches as doth my povertie.' Then sir Percivale wept for very great pitie when hee knew shee was his aunt. 'Ah! faire nephew,' said shee, 'when heard yee any tidings from your mother?' 'Truely,' said hee, 'I heard not of her in a great while, but I have dreamed¹ of her much in my sleepe, and therfore I wot not whether she be dead or alive.' 'Certainly, faire nephew,' said she, 'your mother is dead, for after your departing from her shee tooke such a sorrow that anon, after shee was confessed, she died.' 'Now God have mercy upon her soule,' said sir Percivale, 'it sore forethinketh mee, but all wee must change our life. Now, faire aunt, tell me what is the knight? I deeme it bee hee that beare the red armes on Whitsunday.' 'Wit ye well,' said his aunt, 'that is hee, and that same knight hath no peere, for hee worketh all by miracle, and he shall never be overcome of no earthly mans hands.'

CHAP. XLIX.—*How Merlin likned the round table to the world, and how the knights that should achieve the sancgreall should be knowen.*

ALSO Merlin made the round table in token of the roundnesse of the world²; for by the round table is the world signified by right. For all the world, christen and heathen,

¹ *Dreamed*—In the Middle Ages, dreams were objects of great superstition, and to dream of an absent person seems to have been considered as betokening his or her death. Hence the remark here made by sir Percivale.

² *Roundnesse of the world.*—It is necessary to state, in explanation of this chapter,

resort unto the round table, and when they are chosen to be of the fellowship of the round table, they thinke them more blessed and more in worship then if they had gotten halfe the world. It is well seene by you, for sith ye departed from your mother ye would never see her, ye found such a fellowshippe at the round table. When Merlin had ordained the round table, he said, 'By them that should be fellowes of the round table the truth of the sancgreall shall be knowne.' And men asked him how men might know them that should best do to the achieveing of the sancgreall. Then said he, 'There should bee three white bulls that should achieve it; and that one of the three should passe his father, as much as the lyon passeth his libbard¹, both of strength and of hardinesse. And then Merlin made the siege perilous, in which sir Galahad sat at his meate upon Whitsunday last past.' 'Now, madame,' said sir Percivale, 'so much have I heard of you, that by my good will I will never have to doe with sir Galahad but² by way of kindnesse and for Gods love. Faire aunt, can ye teach me some way where I may finde him? for much wold I love the felowshipec of him.' 'Faire nephewe,' said shee, 'yee must ride unto a castle that is called Goth, where he hath a cosin germain; and if he can tell you no tidings of him, ride straight unto the castle of Carbonek, where the maimed king is lying, for there shall yee heare true tidings of him.'

CHAP. L.—*How sir Percivale came into a monastery, where he found king Evelake, which was an olde man.*

THEN departed sir Percivale from his aunt, either making great sorow, and so hee rode till even-song time³, and then he heard a clock smite⁴, and after hee was ware of a house that was well closed with walls and deepe ditches; and there he had ful good cheere all that night, and on the morowe hee heard a mass, and in the monastery hee found a priest ready at the altar; and behind the altar he saw a rich bed and a faire, as of cloth of silk and of gold. Then sir Percival espied that therein was a man or a woman, for the visage was

that it was long the common notion that the form of the world was that of a round flat surface, not spherical.

¹ *Libbard*.—A leopard.

² *Sir Galahad but*.—The remainder of this chapter, the whole of chapter l. and nearly the whole of li. are omitted in the edition of 1634, by an oversight of the printer, who, it appears, used a copy of East's folio edition, in which a leaf was wanting. The omission is here supplied from that edition, collated with Caxton: it ends with the words, *a good horse would beseem you right well, but*, p. 48. The leaf thus overlooked ends with the same catchword as the one preceding it, which accounts in some measure for the oversight of the printer in not perceiving the break in the narrative.

³ *Even-song time*.—See before, p. 398.

⁴ *Smite*.—i. e. strike.

covered. Then he left of his looking, and heard his service, and when it came to the sacring, he that lay within that perclose¹ dressed him up, and uncovered his head; and then him beseemed a passing olde man, and he had a crown of gold upon his head. And ever he held up his handes unto our Lords body, and said on high: 'Faire sweet father, Jesu Christ, forget not mee.' And so he laid him downe; but always he was in his prayers and orisons, and him seemed for to be of the age of three hundred winters old. And when the masse was done, the priest took our Lords body and bare it unto the sicke king. Then sir Percivale asked one of the bretheren what he was. 'Sir,' said the good man, 'when Joseph of Arimathy was wandering from Jerusalem hee arrived at the city of Sarras, and there he converted a king that hight Evelake; and so this king came with Joseph of Arimathy into this land, and always he was busy to be there as the sancgreall was. And upon a time he nighed so nigh that our Lord was displeased with him, but ever he folowed it more and more, till that God stricke him almost blinde.' Then this king cried mercy, and said: 'Faire Lord, let me never die till that the good knight of my blood of the ninth degree be come, that I may see him openlie when he shall achieve the sancgreall, that I may once kisse him.'

CHAP. LI.—*How sir Percivale saw many men of armes bearing a dead knight, and how he fought against them.*

THEN when the king had thus made his prayeres, he heard a voice that said, 'Heard been thy prayefes, for thou shalt not die til hee have kissed thee.' And this befel of king Evelake. And this same king hath lived above three hundred winters this holy life; and men say that the knight is in the court that shall heale him. 'Sir,' said the good man, 'I pray ye tell me if ye be of the court of king Arthur, and knight of the round table.' 'Yea, forsooth,' said he, 'and my name is sir Percivale de Galis.' And when the good man understood and knew his name, he made of him great joy.

And then sir Percivale departed, and rode till the hour of noon; and he met in a valley about twenty men of arms, which bear in a bier a knight that was slain. And when they saw sir Percivale, they asked him of whence hee was. And he answered and said, 'Of the court of king Arthur.' Then they cried all at once, 'Slay him.' Then sir Percivale smote the first to the ground, and his horse upon him. And then seven of the knights smote upon his shield all at once, and the remnant slew his horse, so that he felle to the ground. So had

¹ *Perclose*.—A small room partitioned off.

they slain him or taken him, had not the knight sir Galahad with the red arms come there by adventure into those parts, and when he saw all those knights upon one knight, he dressed him toward the twenty men of arms as fast as his horse might drive, with his spear in the rest, and smote the foremost horse and man to the ground; and when his spear was broken, he set his hand to his sword, and smote so that they would fight no more, but fled into a thick forrest, and sir Galahad folowed after them. And then sir Percivale wist well it was sir Galahad, and cried aloud, 'A! faire knight, abide and suffer mee to do thankings unto thee, for much have yee done for me.' But ever sir Galahad rode so faste, that at the last he passed out of his sight. And as fast as sir Percivale might hee went after him on foot, crying. And then he met with a yeoman riding upon a hackney, the which led in his hand a great steed, blacker than any beare. 'A! faire friend,' said sir Percivale, 'as ever I may doe for you, I pray that ye will lend me that blacke steed, that I might overtake a knight, the which rideth before me.' 'Sir,' said the yeoman, 'I am right hevvy for you, for a good horse would beseem you right well, but I dare not deliver you this horse, but if yee would take him from mee.' 'That will I not doe,' said sir Percivale. And so they departed¹. And sir Percivale sat him downe under a tree, and made sorrow out of measure. And as he was there, there came a knight riding on the horse that the yeoman led, and he was cleane armed.

CHAP. LII.—*How a yeoman desired him to get againe an horse, and how sir Percivales hackney was slaine, and how he gat an horse.*

AND anon the yeoman come riding after as fast as ever he might, and asked sir Percivale if hee saw any knight riding on his blacke steede. 'Yea, forsooth,' said he, 'why aske yee that of me?' 'Ah, sir,' said the yeoman, 'that steede hee hath taken from me by strength, wherefore my lord will slay mee in what place soever hee findeth mee.' 'Well,' said sir Percivale, 'what wouldest thou that I should doe? thou seest well that I am on foote, but and I had a good horse, I should bring him soone againe.' 'Sir,' said the yeoman, 'take mine hackney and doe the best ye can, and I shal follow you on foote, to wit how ye shall speed.' Then sir Percivale mounted upon that hackney, and rode as fast as he might. And at the last hee saw that knight, and then he cried, 'Knight, turne againe.' And he turned, and set his speare against sir Percivale, and he smote the hackney in the midst of the brest, that hee fell downe dead to the earth, and there hee had a great fall, and the other rode

¹ *Departed.*—Separated.

his way. When sir Percivale saw he would not turne, he abode in sorrow all that day till it was night, and then hee was faint and laid him downe, and slept till it was midnight; and then hee awaked, and saw before him a woman, that said unto him right fiersly, 'Sir Percivale, what doest thou here?' Hee answered and said, 'I doe neither good nor evill.' 'If thou wilt ensure mee,' said she, 'that thou wilt fulfill my will when I shall sommon thee, I shall lend thee mine owne horse, which shall beare thee whether thou wilt.' Sir Percivale was glad of her proffer, and ensured her to fulfill all her desire. And so she brought an horse that was blacke. And so anon when sir Percivale was upon that horse, he thrust to him with his spurres, and so rode by a forrest, and the moone shined cleare, and within an houre and lesse he beare him foure dayes journey thence, til hee came to a rough water that roared, and his horse would have borne him into it.

CHAP. LIII.—*Of the great danger that sir Percivale was in by his horse, and how he saw a serpent and a lyon fight.*

AND when sir Percivale came nigh the brimme, and saw the water so boystrous, he doubted to passe over it; and then hee made the signe of the crosse on his forehead. When the feend felt him so charged, he shooke off sir Percivale, and he went into the water crying and roaring and making great sorrow, and it seemed to him that the water brent. Then sir Percivale perceived that it was a feend, which would have brought him unto his perdition. Then he prayed all that night till on the morrow that it was day. Then saw he that he was on a wild mountaine, which was closed with the sea nigh all about, that hee might see no land about him which might releeve him, but wild beasts. And then he went into a valley, and there he saw a young serpent bring a young lyon by the necke, and so hee came by sir Percivale. With that there came a lyon crying and roaring after the serpent, and anon the lyon had overtaken the serpent, and began battaile with him. And then sir Percivale thought to helpe the lyon, for hee was the most naturall beast of the two; and therewith he drew his sword, and set his shield before him, and there gave the serpent such a buffet that he had a deadly¹ wound. When the lyon saw that, hee made no semblance to fight with him, but made him all the cheare that a beast might make a man. When sir Percivale perceived that, he cast downe his shield, the which was brooken, and then he put off his helme for to gather wind, for he was greatly chafed² with the serpent; and the lyon went

¹ *Deadly*.—Mortal.

² *Chafed*.—i. e. heated; *enchafed*, Caxton.

always about him fawning like a spannel. And then he stroked him with his hand upon the neck and upon the shoulders, and gave thanks unto God of the fellowship of the beast. And about noone the lyon tooke his little whelp and trussed him, and beare him unto the place that hee came from, and then was sir Percivale alone. Then when sir Percivale had prayed, hee saw the lyon come toward him, and then he couched downe at his feete, and all that night the lyon and he slept together. And when sir Percivale slept, he dreamed that there met with him two ladies, and the one sat upon a lyon, and that other sat upon a serpent, and the one of them was young and the other was old, and the youngest him thought said, 'Sir Percivale, my lord saluteth thee and sendeth thee word that thou array thee, for to-morrow thou must fight with the strongest champion of the world, and if thou bee overcome thou shalt be shamed to the worlds end.' And then he asked her who was her lord. And she said, 'The greatest lord of the world.' And so she departed suddenly, and he wist not where she became.

CHAP. LIV.—*Of the vision that sir Percivale saw, and how his vision was expounded, and of his lyon.*

THEN came forth the other lady that rode upon the serpent, and shee said: 'Sir Percivale, I have nourished in this place a great while a serpent, and yesterday ye slew him; but the lyon was not yours.' 'Madame,' said sir Percivale, 'I know well that the lyon is not mine, but the lyon is of a more gentiler nature then the serpent, and therefore I slew him; me seemeth I did not amisse against you. Madame, what would ye that I did?' 'I would,' said she, 'that for the amends of my beast that yee become my man.' And then he answered, 'That will I not graunt you.' 'No,' said she, 'truly yee were never but my servant, save sith yee received the homage of our Lord Jesu Christ, and therefore I ensure you that in what place soever I may find you without keeping, I shall take you as hee that somtyme was my man.' And so shee departed from sir Percivale, and left him sleeping; and on the morrow hee rose and blessed him, and he was passing feeble. Then sir Percivale saw a ship come sailing toward him, and hee went unto the ship, and found it covered within and without with white samite, and at the border¹ stood an old man clothed in a surplis in the likenesse of a priest. 'Sir,' said the old man, 'of whence bee yee?' 'Sir,' said sir Percivale, 'I am of king Arthurs court, and a knight of the round table, the which am

¹ *At the border.*—*At the bord*, Caxton. A rather literal translation of the French *a bord*; i.e. on board.

in the quest of the sanggreall, and heere I am in great duresse and misery, and never am I like to escape out of this wilderness.' 'Sir,' said the old man, 'I am of a strange countrey, and hither I come to comfort you.' 'Sir,' said sir Percivale, 'what signifieth my dreame that I dreamed this night?' And there he told him altogether. 'She that rode upon the lyon,' said the good man, 'betokneth the new law of holy Church, that is to understand, faith, good hope, beleewe, and baptisme; and for great love shee came to thee to warne thee of the great battaile that shall befall thee.' 'With whom shall I fight?' said sir Percivale. 'With the most champion of the world,' said the old man. 'And she that rode upon the serpent signifieth the old law, and that serpent betokneth a feend; and the serpent that thou slewest betokneth the divell that thou rodest upon to the roch, and when thou madest the signe of the crosse, ther thou slewest him and put away his power; and when she asked thee amends, and to become her man, that was to make thee beleewe on her, and leave thy baptisme.' So hee commanded sir Percivale to depart; and so hee left over the bord, and the ship and all went away, he wist not whether. Then hee went up unto the roch, and found the lion that alway kept him fellowship, and had great joy of him.

CHAP. LV.—*How sir Percivale saw a ship comming toward him, and how the lady of the ship told him of her disheritance.*

BY that sir Percivale had abidden there till midday he saw a ship come rowing¹ in the sea as all the wind of the world had driven it; and so it drove under that roch. And when sir Percivale saw this, he hied him thither, and found the ship covered with silke more blacker than any beare², and therein was a gentlewoman of great beautie, and shee was richly beseene, that none might be better. Then sir Percivale asked the damosell whence she came. 'I come out of the wast forrest, where I found the red knight with the white shield,' said the damosell. 'Ah, damosell,' said hee, 'with that knight would I meete passing faine.' 'Sir,' said shee, 'and yee will ensure mee, that yee shall doe my will what time I shal summon you, I shall bring you to that knight.' 'Yea,' said hee, 'I shall promise you your desire.' 'Well,' said shee, 'I saw him in the forrest chasing two knights to a water, the which is called Mortraise³, and they all passed over that water; but the red knights horse was drowned.' Thus shee told him, and sir Percivale was passing glad thereof. Then shee asked him if

¹ *Come rowing.*—The word is probably used here metaphorically.

² *Beare.*—i. e. a bier.

³ *Mortaise.*—*Mortaise*, Caxton.

hee had eaten any meate lately. 'Nay, truely, madame,' said he, 'I have eaten no meate nigh these three dayes, but late here I spake with a good man that fed me with his good and holy words, and refreshed me greatly.' 'Ah, sir knight,' said shee, 'that same man is an enchaunter, for and yee beleewe him yee shall die in this rocke for pure hunger, and bee eaten with wild beasts; and yee bee a yong man and a goodly knight, and I shall helpe you and yee will.' 'What are yee,' said sir Percivale, 'that proffreth mee this great kindnesse?' 'I am,' said shee, 'a gentlewoman that am disherited, which was sometime the richest woman of the world.' 'Damosell,' said sir Percivale, 'who hath disherited you? for I have great pitie of you.' 'Sir,' said shee, 'I dwelled with the greatest man of the world, and I said a word that pleased him not, and then hee would not suffer mee to bee any longer in his company, and so drove mee from mine heritage, and he had never no pitie of me; and sithence, sir knight, it hath befallen me so, through mee and mine I have taken from him many of his men, aud made them become my men; and because I know that thou art a good knight, I beseech thee to helpe mee, and for yee bee a fellow of the round table, wherefore yee ought not to faile no gentlewoman that is disherited, and if she besought you of helpe.'

CHAP. LVI.—*How sir Percivale promised her helpe, and how he required her of love, and how he was saved from the same feend.*

THEN sir Percivale promised her all the helpe that hee might, and then shee thanked him. 'Sir,' said shee, 'now may yee rest you in this heate of the day.' Then shee put off his helme and his shield, and there he slept a great while in a pavilion which the lady had ordered to be pight upon the gravell, and then he awoke, and ther was set upon the table much meate; also he dranke there the strongest wine that ever he dranke as him thought, and therewithall hee was a little chafed¹, more then he ought to be. With that he beheld the gentlewoman, and him thought that she was the fairest creature that ever he saw. And then sir Percivale proffered her love, and praied her that shee would bee his love. And then she refused him in a manner when hee required her, for because hee should bee the more ardent on her; and hee ceased not to pray her of love. And by adventure and grace hee saw his sword lye upon the ground all naked, in whose pomell was a red crosse, and the signe of the crosse therein, and bethought him of his knighthood, and on his promise made before hand unto the good man. Then he made a signe of the crosse on his

¹ *Chafed.*—Heated.

forehead, and therewithall the pavilion turned upside downe, and then it changed unto a smoake and a blacke cloud; and then hee was dread, and cried out aloud.

CHAP. LVII.—*How sir Percivale for pennance rove himselfe through the thigh, and how the damosell was knowen for the devill.*

‘FAIRE, sweet father Jesu Christ, let me not bee shamed, that was neer lost had not thy grace been.’ And then he looked into the ship, and saw her enter therein, which said, ‘Sir Percivale, ye have betrayed me.’ And so shee went with the wind roaring and crying¹, that it seemed that all the water brent after her. Then sir Percivale made great sorrow, and drew his sword unto him, saying, ‘Siththence my flesh will be my master, I shall punish it;’ and therewith he rove himselfe through the thigh, that the blood start about him, and said, ‘Oh, good Lord, take this in recompensation of that I have done against thee, my good Lord.’ So then he clothed and armed him, and hee stopped his bleeding wound with a peece of his shirt. And thus as hee made his moane, hee saw the same ship from the Orient come that the good man was in the day before. And then was the noble knight ashamed with himselfe, and therewith hee fell in a sowne; and when hee awoke hee went unto him weakly, and there he saluted this good man. ‘Sir,’ said hee, ‘heere was a gentlewoman that led mee into deadly sinne,’ and told him all. ‘Oh, good knight,’ said he, ‘thou art a foole, for that gentlewoman was the master feend of hell, and that was the old lady that thou sawest in thy vision riding upon a serpent.’ Then hee told sir Percivale how our Lord Jesu Christ beate him out of heaven for his sinne, the which was the most brightest angell of heaven, and therefore hee lost his heritage. And then the good man vanished away. Then sir Percivale tooke his armour, and entred into the shippe, and so departed from thence.

CHAP. LVIII.—*How sir Launcelot went into a chappell, where he found dead, in a white shirt, a man of religion of an hundred winters old.*

NOW after three dayes, the hermite gat sir Launcelot a horse, a helme, and a sword; and then he departed about the houre of noone. And then hee saw a little house, and a chappell, and an old man that was cloathed al in white ful richly. Then sir Launcelot alighted, and entred into the chappell, and there he saw an old man dead in a white shirt of passing fine cloth. And

¹ *Crying.*—Caxton's text has the more expressive word *yellyngs*.

then the good man tooke a stole about his necke, and a booke, and then he conjured on that booke, and with that they saw an hidious figure and an horrible, that there was no man so hard hearted ¹ but that he would have beene afeard. Then said the feend, 'Thou hast travailed mee greatly, now tel mee what thou wilt with me.' 'I will,' said the good man, 'that thou tell me how my fellow became dead, and whether hee bee saved or damned.' Then he said with an horrible voice, 'Hee is not lost, but saved.' 'How may that be?' said the good man; 'it seemed to mee that hee lived not well, for he brake his order for to were a shirt, where as he ought to were none; and who that trespasseth against our order doth not well.' 'Not so,' said the feend; 'this man that lyeth here dead was come of great linage; and there was a lord that hight the earle de Vale, that held great warre against this mans nephew, which hight Agvarus. And so this Agvarus saw that earle was bigger then he; then he went for to take counsel of his uncle, and then he asked leave, and went out of his hermitage for to maintaine his nephew against the mightie earle. And so it hapned that this man that lyeth here dead did so much by his wisdome and hardinesse, that the earle was taken and three of his lords by force of this dead man ².

CHAP. LIX.—*How men would have hewen a dead man, and it would not bee, and how that sir Launcelot tooke the haire of the dead man.*

THEN was there peace betweene the earle and this Agvarus, and great suretie that the earle should never warre against him. Then this dead man that there lyeth came to this hermitage againe, and then the earle made two of his nephewes for to be avenged upon this man; so they came upon a day, and found this dead man at the sacring of the masse, and they abode till he had said his masse, and then they set upon him and drew out their swords for to have slaine him; but there would no sword bite on him, no more then upon a gad of steele, for the highe Lord which hee served preserved him. And then they spoyled him, and put upon him this shirt, and threw him in the fire, and he lay al that night till it was day in that fire, and yet was he not dead. And so on the morrow I came and found him dead, but I found neither thred nor skinne perished, and so tooke him out of the fire with great feare, and laid him here as ye may see. And now yee may suffer me to goe my way, for I have told you

¹ *Hard hearted.*—Strong-hearted; courageous.

² *This dead man.*—It seems to have been not an uncommon circumstance in the Middle Ages for a knight to become a monk, and afterwards to quit his habit and resume his arms in defence of his family. See, for a curious example, the history of Guichard de Beaulieu, in Walter Mapes de Nugis Curialium, which resembles somewhat the story in our text.

the truth.' And then he departed with an horrible tempest. Then was the good man and sir Launcelot more gladder then they were before; and then sir Launcelot dwelled with the good man that night. 'What seeke ye in this countrey?' said the good man. 'Sir,' said sir Launcelot, 'I goe to seeke the adventures of the sancgreall.' 'Well,' said hee, 'seeke it may yee well, but though it were here, ye shall have no power to see it, and that is long of your sinne, and else were ye more abler then any man living.' And then sir Launcelot began to weepe. Then on the morrow, when the good man had sung his masse, they buried the dead man. Then said sir Launcelot, 'Father, what shall I doe?' 'Now,' said the good man, 'I require you take this haire that was this holy mans, and put it next your skinne, and greatly it shall prevaile you. And I charge you, that yee eate no flesh as long as yee bee in the quest of the holy sancgreall, nor ye shall drinke no wine, and that ye heare masse dayly, and ye may doe it.' So he tooke the haire, and put it upon him, and so he departed at even-song time; and so he rode into a forrest, and there he met with a gentlewoman riding upon a white palfrey; and sir Launcelot asked her where hee might bee harbowred that night. 'Yee shall none find this day nor night, but to morrow ye shall find good herborow, and ease you of that yee bee in doubt of.' Then hee rode till that he came to a crosse, and tooke that for his hoast¹ as for that night.

CHAP. LX.—*Of a vision that sir Launcelot had, and how he told it to an hermit, and desired counsaile of him.*

AND hee put his horse to pasture, and tooke off his helme and his shield, and made his prayers to the crosse that he might never againe fall in deadly sinne. And so hee laid him downe to sleepe, and anon, as he was asleepe, it befell him that he had a vision, that him thought there came a man before him all becompassed² of starres, and with a crowne of gold on his head, and in his fellowship were seaven kings and two knights, and all these worshipped the crosse. Then sir Launcelot looked up to heaven, and him seemed that the clouds opened, and that an old man came downe with a company of angells and alight among them, and gave unto everieach his blessing, and called them his servants and good and true knights. At this vision saw sir Launcelot at the crosse. And on the morrow hee tooke his horse, and rode till midday, and there by adventure he met with the same knight that tooke his

¹ *And tooke that for his hoast.*—i. e. he slept under the protection of the cross by the wayside.

² *Becompassed.*—*Alle by compas of starres*, Caxton.

horse, his helme, and his sword, when hee slept when the sancgreall appeared afore the crosse. And when sir Launcelot saw him, hee cried on high, 'Knight, keepe thee, for thou hast done to mee great unkindnesse.' And then they put before them their speares, and sir Launcelot came so fiersly upon him, that he smote him and his horse downe to the earth, that he had almost brooken his necke. Then sir Launcelot tooke the knights horse that was his owne before hand, and rode till night, and by adventure he met an hermite, and hee rested with that good man all night, and gave his horse such as hee might get. Then said the good man unto sir Launcelot, 'Of whence be ye?' 'Sir,' said he, 'I am of king Arthurs court, and my name is sir Launcelot du Lake, that am in the quest of the sancgreall, and therefore I pray you to counsaile me of a vision the which I had at a crosse.' And so he told him all.

CHAP. LXI.—*How the hermit expounded to sir Launcelot his vision, and told him that sir Galahad was his sonne.*

'NOW, sir Launcelot,' said the good man, 'there thou mightest have understand the high lineage that thou art come off, and thy vision betokneth this: After the passion of Jesu Christ fortie yeares, Joseph of Arimathy preached the victorie of king Evelake, that hee had in the battaile the better of his enemies, and of the seaven kings and the two knights; the first of them is called Napus, a right holy man; and the second hight Nacien, in remembrance of his grandsire, and in him dwelled our Lord Jesu Christ; and the third was called Helias le Grose; and the fourth hight Licias¹; and the fifth hight Jonas, hee departed out of his countrey and went into Wales, and tooke the daughter of Manuell, whereby he had the land of Gaule, and hee came to dwell in this countrey, and of him came king Launcelot thy grandsire, which there wedded the kings daughter of Ireland, and hee was as worthy a man as thou art, and of him came king Ban thy father, the which was the last of the seaven kings. And by thee, sir Launcelot, it signifieth that the angells said that thou were none of the seven fellowships. And the last was the ninth knight, hee was signified to a lyon, for he should passe all manner of earthly knights, that is sir Galahad, thy sonne.' And then sir Launcelot and he went to supper, and laid him to rest, and the haire pricked so sir Launcelots skinne, that it grieved him full sore, but he tooke it meekly, and suffered the paine; and so on the morrow he heard his masse, and tooke his armes, and so tooke his leave.

¹ *Licias*.—*Lysays*, Caxton.

CHAP. LXII.—*How sir Launcelot justed with many knyghts, and how hee was taken.*

AND then hee mounted upon his horse, and rode into a forrest, and held no hie way. And as he looked afore him, he saw a faire plaine, and a castle, and many pavilions of silke of divers hew. And him seemed that hee saw there five hundred knyghts riding on horsebacke, and there was two parties. They that were of the castle were all in blacke, and they that were without were all upon white horses with white trappours. And everyeach hurled to other, whereof sir Launcelot mer-vailed greatly. And at the last him thought that they of the castle were put unto the worst; and then thought sir Launcelot for to helpe the weaker part, in encreasing of his chivalry. And so sir Launcelot thrust in among the parties of the castle, and strooke many knyghts to the earth, so that all those that saw him mervailed that ever one knight might doe such deedes of armes. But alway the white knyghts held them nigh about sir Launcelot, for to weary him and winne him.

And at the last, as a man may not ever endure, sir Launcelot waxed so faint that hee might not lift up his armes for to give one strooke, so that hee wend never to have borne armes. And then all they tooke him, and led him away into a forrest, and there they made him to alight and to rest him; and they said all unto sir Launcelot, 'Blessed be God that yee bee now of our fellowship, for wee shall hold you in our pryson;' and so they left him, with few words. And then sir Launcelot made great sorrow, and said, 'Now I am sure that I am more sinfuller then ever I was.' Thus he rode sorrowing, till that hee came into a deepe valey; and when sir Launcelot saw hee might not ride up into the mountaine, he alighted there under an apple tree, and there hee left his helme and his shield, and put his horse to pasture, and then hee laid him downe to sleepe, and then him thought there came an old man before him, which said, 'Ah, sir Launcelot, of evill faith and poore beleewe, wherfore is thy will turned so lightly¹ toward thy deadly sinne?' And when he had thus said, he vanished away, and sir Launcelot wist not where he became. Then he armed him, and took his horse; and as he rode that way, he saw a chappell where was a recluse, which had a window that shee might see up to the alter, and all aloud she called sir Launcelot, because he seemed a knight arraunt.

CHAP. LXIII.—*How sir Launcelot told his vision unto a woman, and she expounded it unto him.*

AND then he told her how it befell him at the turneiment; and after he told her his vision, and praied her for to tell him what it might meane, for hee was not well content with it.

¹ *Lightly*.—Quickly, readily.

'Ah! sir Launcelot,' said shee, 'as long as yee were knight of earthly knighthood, yee were the most mervailous man of the world and the most adventurous. Now sith that yee bee set among the knights of heavenly adventures, if adventure fell the contrary at that turnement, have thou no mervaille, for that turnement yesterday was but a tokening of our Lord Jesus Christ, and not for then there was none enchantment, for they at the turnement were earthly knights. The turnement was a token for to see who should have most knights, either Eliazar the sonne of good king Pelles, or Augustus¹ the sonne of king Harlon; but Eliazar was all clothed in white, and Augustus was clothed in blacke, and this it betokenith. On the day of Pentecost it befell that earthly kings and knights took a turnement together, that is to say, the quest of the sancgreall. The earthly knights were they the which were clothed all in blacke, and the covering betokneth the sinnes whereof they bee not confessed; and the covering of white betokneth they that choose chastitie, and thus was the quest begun in them. Then thou beheldest the sinners and the good men; and when thou sawest the sinners overcome, thou inclinest unto that part, for bobance² and pride of the world, and all that must be left in the quest. And anon there appeared the sancgreall unto the white knights, but thou were so feeble of good beleve and faith that thou might not abide it, for all the teaching of the good man, but anon thou turned unto the sinners; and that caused thy misadventure, that thou shouldest know good from evill and the vaine glorie of the world, the which is not worth a peare. And this vision signifieth that thou were of evill faith and poore beleve, the which will make thee to fall into the deepe pit of hell, if thou keepe thee not. Beware of everlasting paine, for of all earthly knights I have most pittie of thee, for I know well thou hast not thy peere of any earthly sinfull man.' And so she commanded sir Launcelot to dinner. And after dinner hee rode into a deepe valéy, and there he saw a river and an high mountaine, and through the water he must needs passe. And when he came over, he saw an armed knight, horse and man as blacke as any beare, and without any word speaking, hee smote sir Launcelots horse to the earth, and so hee passed forth and wist not where hee became. And then hee tooke his helme and his shield, and thanked God of his adventure.

CHAP. LXIV.—*How sir Gawaine was nigh wery of the quest of the sancgreall, and of his mervailous dreame.*

NOW when sir Gawaine was departed from his fellowship, he rode from Whitsunday unto Michaelmasse, and all that while could he find none adventure that pleased him. So upon

¹ *Augustus.*—*Argustus*, Caxton.

² *Bobance.*—Boasting; vaunting.

a day it befell that sir Gawaine met with sir Ector de Maris, and they two talked the one unto the other, and complained them greatly that they could find none adventures. 'Truly,' said sir Gawaine unto sir Ector, 'I am nigh weary of this quest, and loth I am to follow any further.' 'One thing mervailleth me,' said sir Ector, 'I have met with twentie knights, and they all complaine as I do.' 'I mervaille,' said sir Gawaine, 'where sir Lancelot your brother is.' 'Truely,' said sir Ector, 'I cannot heere of him, nor of sir Galahad, sir Percivale, nor of sir Bors.' 'Let them be,' said sir Gawaine, 'for they foure have no earthly peares. And if one thing were not in sir Launcelot, he had no fellow of none earthly man; but if those knights faile of the sancgreall, it is in wast of all the remnant of us knights of the round table to recover it.' Thus sir Ector de Maris and sir Gawaine rode more then eight days together. And upon a Saturday they found an old chappell, the which was al towasted and broken, that it seemed that no man repaired thither, and there they alighted, and for heavynesse they fell on sleepe; and there befell them both full strange and mervailous adventures in dreaming. And first of sir Gawaine, him seemed that hee came into a meddow full of herbes and floures, and there hee saw a racke of blacke buls, to the number of an hundred and fifty, save three of them were white, and one of the three had a blacke spot; and the other two were so faire and so white that they might be no whiter; and these three buls which were so faire were tied with two strong cords. And the remnant of the buls said among them: 'Let us goe hence to seeke better pasture.' And so some went, and some came againe, but they were so leane that they might not stand upright; and of the buls that were so white, that one came againe and no mo. This vision befell sir Gawaine that night.

CHAP. LXV.—*Of the vision that sir Ector de Maris had, and how hee justed with sir Uwaine les Avoutres, his sworne brother.*

BUT to sir Ector de Maris befell an other vision, the contrary. For it seemed him that his brother sir Launcelot and hee alighted out of one chaire and lept upon two horses; and the one said unto the other, 'Go wee to seeke that we shall not find?' And him thought that a man beate sir Launcelot, and dispoiled him, and clothed him in an other array, the which was all full of knots, and set him upon an asse. And so hee road till hee came to the fairest well that ever hee saw. And then sir Launcelot alighted, and would have drinke of that well; and when he stooped to drinke of that water, the water sanke from him; and when sir Launcelot saw that, he returned

and went thither from whence hee came¹. And then sir Launcelot roade to a rich mans house where as at that time was a wedding, and there hee saw a king, that said, 'Sir knight, heere is no place for you.' And then hee turned againe unto the chaire that he came from. Thus within a little while both sir Gawaine and sir Ector awaked out of their sleepe. And each of them told other of their vision, the which mervailed them greatly. Now as they sate thus talking, they saw an hand shewing unto the elbow, and the hand was covered with red samit, and upon the same hand hung a bridell not rich; and held within the fist a great candle which brent full cleare, and so passed before them and entred into the chappell; and then it vanished away, and they wist not where it became. And anon there came downe a voice which said unto them, 'Knights full of evill faith and poore of beleewe, these two things have failed you, and therefore yee may not come unto the adventures of the holy sancgreall.' Then first spake sir Gawaine, and said, 'Sir Ector, have yee heard these words?' 'Ye truely,' said sir Ector, 'I have heard all. Now goe we,' said sir Ector, 'unto some hermit that will tell us of our vision, for it seemeth me wee labour all in vaine.' And then they departed, and road into a valey, and there they met with a squier. 'Sir,' said sir Gawaine, 'can yee teach us unto any hermit?' 'Here within a little mountaine is one,' said the squier; 'but it is so rough that yee must goe on foote; but there shall yee find a poore house, and there is Nacien the hermit, which is the holiest man in all this countrey.' And so they departed either from other. And then they came in a valey, where as they met with a knight well armed, which proffred them to just as farre as hee saw them. 'In the name of God,' said sir Gawaine, 'sith I departed from Camelot, there was not one that proffred me to just but once.' And then either of them dressed to other for to just, and came together as fast as their horses might runne; and sir Gawaine was wounded in the left side; but the other knight was smitten through the brest, and the speare came out on the other side, and so they fell both out of their sadeles downe to the ground, and in the falling they brak both their speares. Then anon sir Gawain arose, and set his hand unto his sword, and cast his shield before him; but all for nought was it, for the knight had no power for to arise against him. Then said sir Gawaine, 'Ye must yeeld you as an overcome man, or else I may sley you.' 'Ah, sir knight,' said hee, 'I am but dead, for Gods sake and of your gentlenesse lead me heereby unto an abbey, that I may receive my creatour.' 'Sir,' said sir Gawaine, 'I know no house of religion heereby.' 'Sir,' said the knight, 'set mee

¹ *From whence hee came.*—And wente thyder as the hede came fro, Caxton; i. e. towards the source of the stream.

² *Receive my creatour.*—The phrase for taking the host or consecrated wafer.

upon a horse before, and I shall teach you the way.' Then sir Gawaine set him up in the sadell. And so sir Gawaine leapt upon the same horse behind him for to susteine him. And so long they rode till they came to an abbey, where as they were received; and anon this hurt knight was unarmed, and received his creatour and maker. Then sir Gawaine asked him what manner of knight he was, and what was his name, as hee that knew him not. Then the hurt knight answered, 'I am,' said hee, 'of king Arthurs court, and my name is sir Uwaine le Avoutres, sonne unto king Urience, and have laboured me in the quest of the sancgreall, as thy selfe, sir Gawaine, and many other knights have done; and my death I pray to God he will forgive it thee; for now from hence forth it shall bee said that the one sworne brother hath slaine the other.'

CHAP. LXVI.—*How sir Gawaine and sir Ector came unto an hermitage for to be confessed, and how they shewed to the hermit their visions.*

'ALAS!' said sir Gawaine, 'that ever this misadventure is thus befallen me.' Then sir Gawaine began to weepe, and in likewise did sir Ector. And then sir Uwaine himselfe and sir Gawaine together drew out the trunchion of the speare, and anon the soule departed from the body. Then sir Gawaine and sir Ector right worshipfully buried him as men ought to bury a kings sonne, and made his name to bee written upon his tombe, and by whom hee was slaine. So then departed sir Gawaine and sir Ector, as heavie as they might be for their misadventure; and so they rode till that they came unto the rough mountaine, and there they tied their horses, and went on foote unto the hermitage. 'Faire lords,' said the hermite, 'what adventure hath brought you hither?' 'Sir,' said sir Gawaine, 'to speak with you for to bee confessed.' 'Sirs,' said the hermite, 'I am ready.' Then began sir Gawaine first, and told him of his vision which hee had in the chappell; and sir Ector told him all as it is before reharsed. 'Sir,' said the hermite unto sir Gawaine, 'the faire meadow and the racke therein ought to bee understood the round table, and by the meadow ought to be understood humilitie and pacience. And at the racke did eate an hundred and fiftie bulls; and all those bulls were very proud and blacke, except only three. By the bulls is to understand the fellowship of the round table, which for their great sinnes and for their outrageous wickednesse be blacke; and the three which were white bulls, except onely one the which was bespotted, the two white bulls betoken sir Galahad and sir Percivale, for they two be cleane without any spot; and the third that had a spot signifieth sir Bors de Ganis, which trespassed never but once, that all his offence is forgiven him and his misdeedes. And all the blacke bulls which said,

"Go we hence," they were those which at Pentecost at the high feast tooke upon them to go in the quest of the holy sancgreall without any confession; and therefore they returned into the wast countries, that signifieth death, for there shall die many of them, everyeach of them shall sleigh other of them for sinne, and they that shall escape shall bee so leane, that it shall bee great mervaile to see them: and of the three bulls without spot, the one shall come againe and the other two never.'

CHAP. LXVII.—*How the hermite Nacien expounded their vision.*

THEN spake the hermite Nacien unto sir Ector de Maris: 'Sooth it is that sir Launcelot and ye are coming downe of one chaire; the chaire betokeneth mastership and lordship, the which ye came downe from. But ye goe to seeke that yee shall never find, which is the sancgreall, for it is the secret thing of the Lord Jesu Christ. When sir Launcelot fell downe from his horse the meaning was that hee hath taken him unto humilitie, for he hath cryed mercie for all his sinnes, and hath sore repented him; and our Lord hath visited and clothed him in his clothing, the which is full of knots, that is hard haire that he weareth dayly; and the asse that he rode upon is a beast of humilitie. And the well betokeneth the high grace of God, the more that men desire to take it the more shall be their desire. So when he came nigh unto the sancgreall, he meeked him as he that held him not a man worthy to be so nigh the holy vessell, for hee had beene so defouled in deadly sinne by the space of many yeares; and then soone after hee shall returne unto Camelot out of this cuntry, and there shall he say a part of such things as he hath found.

'Now will I tell you what betokeneth the hand with the candle and the bridle. That is to understand the Holy Ghost, where as charitie is ever, and the bridle signifieth abstinence; and the candle which sheweth clearnesse and light signifieth the right way of our Lord Jesu Christ.' And then he went and said, 'Knights of poore faith and wicked believe, these three things faileth, chastitie, abstinence, and truth, therefore yee may not attaine that high adventure of the holy sancgreall.'

CHAP. LXVIII.—*Of the good counsaile that the hermite gave unto them.*

'CERTAINLY,' said sir Gawaine, 'soothly have yee said, and that feele I openly. Now I pray you, good man and holy father, tell me why we met not with so many adventures as wee were wont to doe, and commonly have the better?' 'I shall tell you,' said the good man; 'the adventure of the sancgreall, which ye and many other have undertaken the quest thereof, and find it not, the cause is, for it appeareth not to

sinner; wherfore marvaile not though yee faile thereof, and many other. For I dare well say, as sinfull as sir Launcelot hath beene, he hath taken upon him to forsake sinne; and were not that hee is unstable, but by his thought he is like to turne againe, should be next to achieve it, save sir Galahad his sonne.' 'Sir,' said sir Gawaine, 'it seemeth mee by your words that for our sinnes it will nothing availe us to travaile in this quest.' 'Truely,' said the good man, 'there be an hundred such as yee bee that never shall prevaile but to have shame.' And when they heard these words, they commended him to God. Then sir Gawaine and sir Ector departed, and so they tooke their horses, and rode till they came to a fosters house, which harbowred them right well. And on the morrow they departed from their hoast, and rode long or they could find any adventure.

CHAP. LXIX.—*How sir Bors met with an hermite, and how hee was confessed unto him, and of the pennance that was enjoyned him.*

SO when sir Bors was departed from Camelot, he met with a religious man riding upon an asse, and sir Bors saluted him. 'What are ye?' said the good man. 'Sir,' said sir Bors, 'I am a knight that faine would bee counsailed in the quest of the sanggreall; for hee shall have much earthly worship that may bring it to good end.' 'Certainly,' said the good man, 'that is sooth, for he shal bee the best knight of the world, and the fairest of all the fellowship; but wit yee well, there shall none attaine it but by cleannesse, that is pure confession.' So rode they together till they came to an hermitage, and there hee praied sir Bors to dwell all that night with him; and so they went both into the chappell, and ther he was cleane confessed, and they eate bread and dranke water together. 'Now,' said the good man, 'I pray thee that thou wilt eate none other till thou sit at the table whereas the sanggreall shall bee.' 'All is welcome,' said sir Bors, 'that God sendeth me.' 'Also,' said the good man, 'instead of a shirt, and in signe of chastisement, yee shall were this garment.' And then hee tooke him a scarlet coate, so that should bee in stead of a shirt, till that hee had fulfilled the quest of the sanggreall. And the good man found him in so mervailous a life and so stable, that he mervailed thereof. Then hee armed him and tooke his leave, and so departed. So about evensong time, by the adventure, he came into a strong toure and an hie, and there was hee lodged gladly.

CHAP. LXX.—*How sir Bors was lodged with a lady, and how hee tooke upon him for to fight against a champion for her land.*

AND when hee was unarmed, they led him into an high toure wher was a lusty young lady and a faire; and shee received him with great joy, and made him to sit downe by her. And so

hee was set to his supper with flesh and many dainties. And when sir Bors saw that, hee bethought him of his pennance, and bad a squier to bring him water; and hee made sopps therein and eate them. 'A!' said the lady, 'I trow yee like not my meate.' 'Yes, truely,' said sir Bors, 'God thanke you, madame, but I may eat no other meate this day.' With that there came a squier, and said, 'Madame, yee must purvey you to morrow for a champion, for else your sister will have this castle, and also your lands, except yee can find a knight that will fight to morrow in your quarrell against sir Pridan le Noire.' Then she made great sorrow, and said, 'Ah! Lord God, wherfore graunt you to hold my land whereof I shall now be disherited without reason and right?' And when sir Bors had heard her say thus, hee said, 'I shall comfort you.' 'Sir,' said she, 'I shall tell you. There was here a king that hight Aniause, the which held al this land in his keeping; so it mishapned that hee loved a gentlewoman, a great deale elder then I am, so hee tooke¹ unto her all his land in keeping, and all his men to governe, and shee brought up many evill customes, whereby shee put to death a great part of his kinsmen. And when he saw that, hee let chase her out of this land and betooke² it to me, and all this land in my guiding. But anon as this worthy king was dead, this other lady began to war upon mee, and hath destroyed many of my men and turned them against me, that I have wel nigh no men left. And I have nought else but this high toure that she left me, and yet she hath promised me that she will have this toure, without I can find a knight to fight with her champion.' 'Now may yee send her word that yee have found a knight that shall fight with that sir Pridan le Noyre in Gods quarrell and yours.'

CHAP. LXXI.—*Of a vision that sir Bors had that night, and how hee fought and overcame his adversary.*

AND then anon as hee was on sleepe him befell a vision; him thought there came to him two birds, the one was as white as any swanne, and that other was mervailous black, but it was not so great as that other, but in the likenesse of a raven. Then the white bird came to him, and said, 'If thou wouldst give me meat and serve me, I should give thee all the riches of the world, and I shal make thee as faire and as white as I am.' So the white bird departed and went away. And then there came to him the blacke bird, and said, 'And thou wilt serve me to morrow and have me in no dispite, though I be blacke, for wite thou well that more availeth my blacknesse then the others whitenesse.' And then shee departed, and he had another vision. Him thought that he came unto

¹ Tookt.—Gave.

² Betooke.—Gave.

a great place, which seemed a chappell, and there hee found a chaire set on the left side, which was worme-eaten and feeble; and on the right hand were two flowers like to lillies, and the one would have taken from the other her whitenesse, but a good man parted them, that the one touched not the other, and then out of every floure came many floures and fruit great plentie. Then him thought the good man said, 'Should not hee doe great folly, that would let these two floures perish for to succour the rotten tree that it fell not to the ground?' 'Sir,' said he, 'it seemeth me that this might not availe.' 'Now keepe thee well,' said the good man, 'that thou never see such an adventure befall thee.' Then sir Bors awaked, and made the signe of the crosse in the mids of his forehead, and so hee arose and clothed him. And there came the lady of the place, and shee saluted him, and sir Bors her againe; and so they went to a chappell and there heard their service. Then sir Bors asked his armour; and when he was armed hee lept upon his horse, and so departed all the knights and men with him. And as soone as these ladies met together, shee which sir Bors should fight for complained to the other lady and said, 'Madame, yee have done me great wrong to bereve me of my lands that king Aniause gave me, and full loth I am there should bee any battaile.' 'Yee shall not chose,' said the other lady; 'or else your knight shall withdraw him.' Then there was the crie made, which partie that had the better of those two knights, his lady should make all the lands to rejoyce¹. Now departed the one knight here, and the other there; then they came together with such a randome that they perced their shieldes and their hauberkes, and their speares flew in pieces, and they wounded either other sore. Then hurled they together so that they fell both to the ground, and their horses betweene their legs. And anon they rose, and there found sir Bors more greater defence in that knight then hee wend², for that sir Pridan was a full good knight, and held the stoure³ in like hard⁴. That perceived sir Bors, and suffered him till hee was nigh attaint, and then he ranne upon him more, and the other went backward for dread of death. So in his withdrawing hee fell upright, and sir Bors drew his helme so strongly that he rent it from his head, and gave him great strookes with the flat of his sword upon the visage, and bad him to yeeld him, or else he should sley him. Then hee cried him mercy, and said, 'Faire knight, for Gods love sley me not, and I shall ensure thee never more to warre against thy lady, but alway shall bee toward her.' And sir Bors let him bee. Then the old lady fled with all her knights.

¹ To rejoyce.—That his lady shold rejoyce all the lande, Caxton; i.e. enjoy. Make should probably be have.

² Wund.—Supposed; expected.

³ Stours.—Battle; assault.

⁴ In like hard.—Equally hard.

CHAP. LXXII.—*How the lady was restored unto her lands by the battaile of sir Bors, and of his departing, and how hee met sir Lionell taken and beaten with thornes, and also of a maide.*

SO then came sir Bors unto all that held lands of his lady, and said that he should destroy them but if they did such service unto her as belonged to her lands. So when all the countrey was set in peace, then sir Bors tooke his leave and departed, and shee thanked him greatly, and would have given him great riches, but he refused it. Then hee rode all that day till night, and came unto an herborow¹ unto a lady which knew him well enough, and made of him great joy. And on the morrow, as soone as the day appeared, sir Bors departed from thence, and so rode into a forrest unto the houre of midday; and there befel him a mervailous adventure. So hee met at the departing of two wayes two knights that led sir Lionell his brother bound upon a strong hackney, and his hands bound before his brest, and everyeach of them held in his hand thornes wherewith they went beating him so sore that the blood trailed downe. Anon sir Bors dressed him for to rescue his brother. And so hee looked on the other side of him, and saw a knight which brought a faire gentlewoman, and would have set her in the thickest place of the forrest for to have beene the more surer out of the way from them that sought him. And she, which was no thing assured, cried with an high voice, 'Saint Mary, succour your maide.' When sir Bors heard her say thus, he had much sorrow, that he wist not what to doe. 'For if I let my brother be, in adventure he must be slaine, and that would I not for all the earth; and if I helpe not the maide, shee is shamed for ever.' Then lift hee up his eyes and said, al weeping, 'Faire sweet Lord Jesu Christ, whose liege-man I am, keepe sir Lionell my brother, that none of these knights sley him; and, for pittie of you and of your ladies sake, I shall succour this maide.'

CHAP. LXXIII.—*How sir Bors left to rescue his brother, and went to rescue the damosell, and how it was told that sir Lionell was dead.*

AND so hee dressed him unto the knight the which led the gentlewoman, and then he cried to him, 'Sir knight, lay your hand off that maide, or else yee be but dead.' And then the knight set downe the maide, and was all armed at all peeces, save hee lacked his speare; then he dressed his shield, and drew out his sword, and sir Bors smote him so hard that it went through his shield and haberjon² on the left shoulder, and

¹ *Herborow.*—A lodging.

² *Haberjon.*—The breastplate.

through great strength sir Bors beate him downe to the earth ; and at the pulling out of sir Bors speare there hee sowned. Then came sir Bors to the maide, and said, 'How seemeth it you of this knight? yee be delivered of him at this time.' 'Now,' said she, 'I pray you leade mee there as this knight had mee.' 'What knight was he that had you in the forrest?' said sir Bors. 'By my faith,' said she, 'he is my cosin; so wot I not with what engin¹ the feend enchaind him, for yesterday he tooke me from my father prively; for I nor none of my fathers men mistrusted him.' As shee stood thus talking with him; there came twelve knights seeking after her; and anon shee told them all how sir Bors had delivered her. So then sir Bors rode after sir Lionell by the trace of their horses. Then he overtooke a man which was clothed in a religious clothing, and rode upon a strong blacke horse, blacker then a beare², and said, 'Sir knight, what seeke ye?' 'Sir,' said sir Bors, 'I seeke my brother that I saw within a little space agoe beaten with two knights.' 'Ah! sir Bors, discomfort you not nor fall into any vaine hope³, for I shall tell you tidings such as they be, truly he is dead.' Then he shewed him a new slaine body lying in a thicke bush, and it seemed him well that it was the body of sir Lionell; and then hee made such sorrow that hee fell to the ground in a sowne, and lay there a great while. And when hee came to himself againe, hee tooke up the body in his armes and put it upon his saddle. And so long they rode till they saw a faire tower, and before it there seemed an old feeble chappell; and then they alighted both, and put him into a tombe of marble.

CHAP. LXXIV.—*How sir Bors told his dreame which hee had dreamed unto a priest, and of the good counsaile that the priest gave him.*

'NOW leave we him here,' said the good man, 'and goe we unto harbour till to morrow, and then will we come hither againe to doe him service.' 'Sir,' said sir Bors, 'be ye a priest?' 'Yea, forsooth,' said he. 'Then I pray you,' said sir Bors, 'that ye will tell me a dreame which befell mee the last night.' 'Say on,' said hee. Then sir Bors began to tell him of his birds, one white, another blacke, and of the rotten tree, and of the white flowers. 'Sir,' said the priest, 'I shall tell you a part now, and the other deale to morrow. The white foule betokneth a gentlewoman faire and rich, which hath loved thee long, and if thou warne⁴ her love, she shall goe die anon, if thou have no pittie on her; that signifieth the great bird, the which shall make thee for to warn her. For that shall befall thee now if

¹ Engin.—Craft.

² Vaine hope.—Wanhope, Caxton.

³ Bears.—A bery, Caxton.

⁴ Warns.—Forbid; refuse.

thou warne her, that sir Launcelot the good knight thy cosin shall die; and therefore men shall now say that thou art a man-slayer, both of thy brother sir Lionell and of thy cosin sir Launcelot du Lake, the which thou mightest have saved and rescewed full easily, but thou weenest to rescue a maide which pertaineth no thing to thee.' And then he led sir Bors into an high tower, and there hee found knights and ladies; those ladies said hee was welcome. And so they unarmed him, and, when he was in his doublet, men brought him a mantell furred with ermines, and put it about him. And then they made him good cheare, that he had forgotten all his sorrow and anguish, and only set his heart in these delights and dainties, and tooke no more thought for his brother sir Lionell, neither for sir Launcelot his cosin. And anon came out of a chamber to him the fairest lady that ever hee saw, and more richer besene than ever he saw queene Guenever or any other lady of estate. 'Loe, sir Bors,' said they, 'here is the lady to whom we all owe our service, and I trow she be the richest lady and the fairest of the world, and the lady which loveth you best above all other knights, for shee will have no knight but you.' And then they sat downe together, and spake of many things, in so much that she besought him to be her love, for she had loved him above all earthly men, and she should make him richer then ever was man of his age.

CHAP. LXXV.—*How by Gods grace sir Bors escaped the devill in a woman's likeness.*

WHEN sir Bors understood her words hee was right evill at ease. And with that he blessed his body and his visage, and anon he heard a full great noyse and a great crie, as though all the feends of hell had beene about him; and therewith hee saw neither tower, nor lady, nor gentlewomen, nor no chappell where he did bring his brother unto. Then held hee up both his hands to heaven, and said, 'Faire father God, I am right grievously escaped.' And then hee tooke his armes and his horse, and rode forth his way. Then hee heard a clocke smite on his right hand, and thither hee came to an abbey on his right hand closed with high walls, and there hee was let in. 'Sir,' said sir Bors, 'if that there bee any holy man in this house, I pray you let me speake with him.' Then one of them led him unto the abbot, which was in a chappell. 'Sir,' said sir Bors, 'I am a knight arraunt,' and told him all the adventure that he had seene. 'Sir knight,' said the abbot, 'I wot not what yee bee, for I wend never that a knight of your age might have beene so strong in the grace of our Lord Jesu

¹ *I am right grievously escaped.*—i. e. I have had a narrow escape.

Christ ; not for then yee shall goe unto your rest, for I will not counsaile you this day, it is to late, and to morrow I shall counsaile you as I can.'

CHAP. LXXVI.—*Of the holy communication of an abbot unto sir Bors, and how the abbot counsailed him.*

AND that night was sir Bors richly served ; and on the morrow early he heard masse ; and then sir Bors told the abbot that hee was a fellow of the quest of the sancgreall, and how hee had charge of an holy man to eat bread and water ; and alsoe sir Bors told of his dreame. Then said the abbot to sir Bors, 'Sir knight, the lady for whom yee fought for, and king Aniause, which was lord there before, betokneth Jesu Christ, which is king of the world ; and that yee fought with the champion for the lady, this it doth beetoken, for when yee tooke the battaile for the lady, by her yee shall understand the new law of Jesu Christ and holy church ; and by the other law yee shall understand the old law and the feend, which all day warreth against the holy church, for yee did the battaile with right ; for yee bee Jesu Christs knights, therefore yee ought to bee defenders of the holy church. And by the blacke bird might bee understood the holy church, which saith "I am black," but shee is right faire and beautifull ; and by the white bird that yee saw might men understand Sathan, the feend of hell ; and I shall tell you, the swanne¹ is white without, and blacke within ; it is hipocrisie. And when the feend appeared to thee in the likenesse of a man of religion, and blamed thee that thou left thy brother for a lady, so led thee where thou seemed thy brother was slaine, but hee is yet on live, and all was for to put thee in errour. And the faire ladies were all divels.'

CHAP. LXXVII.—*How sir Bors met with his brother sir Lionell, and how sir Lionell would have slaine sir Bors his brother.*

THEN went sir Bors from thence, and hee rode all that day, and harboured with an old lady. And on the morrow hee rode unto a castle in a valey, and there he met with a yeoman going a great pace towards a Forrest. 'Tell mee,' said sir Bors, 'canst thou tell mee of any adventure?' 'Sir,' said he, 'heere shall bee under this castle a great and mervailous turneyment.' Then sir Bors thought to bee there, if hee might meet with his brother sir Lionel, or any of his fellowship which

¹ *The swanne.*—I am not aware from whence this odd idea of the quality of the swan was taken.

were in the quest of the sanggreall. And then he turned to an hermitage that was in the entry of the forrest, and when hee was come thither, he found ther sir Lionel his brother, which sate all armed at the entrie of the chappell doore, for to abide there harborow till upon the morrow that the turneiment should bee. And when sir Bors saw him, hee had great joy of him, and said, 'Fairst brother, when came yee hither?' Anon as sir Lionell saw him, hee said, 'Ah, sir Bors, as for you, I might have been slaine; when yee left me for to succour a gentlewoman, and suffred me in perill of death, for never before did no brother to another so great an untruth; as for that misdeede, I now ensuere you but death; and that shall yee find as soone as I am armed.' When sir Bors understood his brothers wrath, hee kneeled downe to the earth and cried him mercy, holding up both his hands, and prayed him to forgive him. 'Nay,' said sir Lionell, 'that shall never bee; thou shalt have but death for it, for it were pittie yee lived any longer.' Right so hee went and tooke his harnais, and mounted upon his horse, and came afore him, and said, 'Sir Bors, keepe thee from mee, for I shall doe to thee as I should doe to a felon or a traitour; therefore start upon thy horse, and so shalt thou bee most at thine advantage; and but if thou doe so, I will runne upon thee there as thou standest on foot, and so the shame shall bee mine, and the harme thine, but of that sinne ne recke I not.' When sir Bors saw that hee must fight with his brother or else to die, he wist not what to doe. Then his heart counsailed him not so to doe, in as much as sir Lionell was borne or hee, wherefore he ought to beare him reverence; yet kneeled he downe afore sir Lionels horse feet, and said, 'Fairst brother, have mercy upon me, and sley me not, and have in remembrance the great love which ought to bee betweene us twaine.' When sir Lionell saw he would none otherwise doe, and that hee would not rise to give him battaile, hee rushed over him, so that hee smote sir Bors with his horse feete upward to the earth, and hurt him so sore, that hee sowned of distresse, the which felt in himselfe to have died without confession. So when sir Lionell saw this, hee alight from his horse for to have smitten off his head. Then came the hermit running unto him, which was a good man and of great age, and well had hee heard all the words that were betweene them both, and so fell downe upon him¹.

CHAP. LXXVIII.—*How sir Colgreuance fought against sir Lionell for to save sir Bors, and how the hermit was slaine.*

THEN said hee unto sir Lionell, 'Ah, gentle knight, have mercy on me and on thy brother, for if thou sley him thou shalt be dead in sinne.' 'Now, so God me helpe,' said sir

¹ *Fell downe upon him.—Upon syre Bors, Caxton.*

Lionell, 'sir priest, but if you flee from him I shall sley you, and hee shall never the sooner bee quit.' Therewith hee smote him so hard that his head went backward. Not for then hee strained him not of his evill will, but tooke his brother by the helme and unlaced it, and had slaine him without faile, but it hapned that sir Colgrevice, a knight of the round table, came at that time thither, as it was our Lords will; and when hee saw the good man slaine, hee mervailed much what it might bee. And then he beheld how sir Lionell would have slaine his brother, and knew sir Bors, which hee loved right well. Then start he downe, and tooke sir Lionell by the shoulders, and drew him strongly back from sir Bors, and said, 'Sir Lionell, will ye sley your brother, one of the worthiest knights of the world? that ought no good man to suffer.' 'Sley him I will,' said he, 'who saith the contrary; for he hath done so much against me that he hath well deserved it;' and so ranne upon him, and would have smitten him through the head. And sir Colgrevice ranne between them, and said, 'And yee be so hardy to doe so any more, we two shall meddle together.' Then sir Lionell defied him, and long endured the battaile. Then sir Bors arose up all anguiously, and beheld sir Colgrevice the good knight fight with his brother for his quarrell. Then would he have risen for to have departed them, but he had not so much might to stand on his feete; so he abode so long that sir Colgrevice had the worse, so that hee abode but death, for hee had lost so much of his blood that it was marvaile that hee might stand upright. Then hee beheld sir Bors, which sate dressing him upward, and said, 'Ah, sir Bors, why come ye not to cast mee out of perrill of death, wherein I have put mee to succour you, which were right now nigh the death?' When sir Bors heard that, hee arose, and put on his helme. Then perceived he first the hermit priest which was there slaine; then made hee a mervailous sorrow upon him.

CHAP. LXXIX.—*How sir Lionell slew sir Colgrevice, and how after hee would have slaine his brother sir Bors.*

THEN oft cried sir Colgrevice upon sir Bors, and said, 'Why will yee let mee die for your sake? if it please you that I die for you, the death will please mee better to save a worthy man.' At these words sir Lionell smote him so sore that he beare him to the earth. So when he had slaine sir Colgrevice, he ranne upon his brother as a feendly¹ man, and gave him such a strooke that hee made him stoope. Then sir Bors drew his sword, all weeping, and said:

'Faire brother, God knoweth mine entent: and well ye wot

¹ *Faendly*.—Diabolical; fiendish.

that I am not greatly afeard of you, but I dread the wrath of God. Now God have mercy upon mee, though I defend my life against my brother.' With that sir Bors lifted up his sword, and would have stricken his brother.

CHAP. LXXX.—*How a voice was heard that charged sir Bors not to touch him, and of a cloud that came betweene them.*

THEN heard hee a voice that said, 'Flee, sir Bors, and touch him not, or else thou shalt sley him.' Right so alighted a cloud betweene them in the likenesse of a fire, and a mer-vailous flame, that both their shields brent. With that he heard a voice say, 'Sir Bors, goe hence, and beare thy brother no longer fellowship, but take thy way anon right to the sea, for sir Percivale abideth thee there.' Then hee said to his brother, 'Brother, forgive me, for Gods love, all that I have trespassed against you.' Then he answered, 'God forgive it thee, and I doe.' So sir Bors departed from him, and rode to an abbey which was nigh the sea. That night sir Bors rested him there; and in his sleepe there came a voice unto him, and bad him go to the sea. He start up, and at a brooken wall he rode out, and hee rode so long till that he came to the sea. And upon the strand hee found a ship covered all with white samite¹, and as soone as hee entred into the ship, the shippe departed into the sea. And so he slept till it was day; then he awaked, and saw in the middest of the ship a knight all armed save his helme, and then hee knew that it was sir Percivale de Galis, and then hee made of him right great joy. Then sir Bors smiled, and did off his helme; and then sir Percivale knew him, and either made of other great joy, that it was marvaile to heare. Then said sir Percivale, 'Wee lacke nothing now but the good knight sir Galahad.'

CHAP. LXXXI.—*How sir Galahad fought at a turnement, and how he was knownen of sir Gawaine and sir Ector de Maris.*

AS saith the historie, that when sir Galahad had rescued sir Percivale from the twentie knights, hee rode into a vast forrest, wherein he rode many journies², and found there many adventures, which he brought to an end³. Then hee tooke his way to the sea on a day, and it befell that he passed by a castle where was a turnement; but they without had done so much that they within were put to the worse, yet they within were

¹ *Samite*.—This word has been explained before, see book i. p. 84.

² *Journies*.—Days.

³ *An end*.—Caxton adds, *wherof the story maketh here no mencyon.*

knights good enough. And when sir Galahad saw that those within were at so great a mischief, then he thought to helpe them, and smote there as they were thickest, and so hee did there wonderfull deedes of armes, that they all mervailed thereof. Then it hapned that sir Gawaine and sir Ector de Maris were with the knights without; but when they espied the white shield with the red crosse, the one said to the other, 'Yonder is the good knight sir Galahad; now he should be a great foole that would meete with him to fight.' So by adventure he came by sir Gawaine, and he smote him so hard that he cleave his helme, and the coefe of the iron unto his head, so that sir Gawaine fell to the earth; but the strooke was so great, that it slanted downe to the earth, and carved the horse shoulder in two. But when sir Galahad saw that the knights without were all beaten, and that there would none turne againe, hee stole away prively, so that no man wist where he became. 'Now by my head,' said sir Gawaine unto sir Ector, 'the words are true that were said of sir Launcelot du Lake, "that the sword which stuck in the stone should give me such a buffet," and certainly now it is proved true, for never before had I such a strooke of a mans hand.' Then sir Gawaine was borne into a castle, and unarmed him, and laid him in a rich bed, and a leach¹ found that hee might live and bee whole within a moneth. Thus sir Gawaine and sir Ector abode together, for sir Ector would not away till sir Gawaine were whole. And the good knight sir Galahad rode so long till that he came that night to the castle of Carboneke². And it befell him that he was benighted in an hermitage; and so the good man was full glad when he saw that he was a knight arraunt. So when they were at rest, there came a gentlewoman knocking at the doore, and called sir Galahad. Then sir Galahad went to her, and asked her what shee would. 'Sir Galahad,' said shee, 'I will that yee arme you, and follow me, for I wil shew you within these three dayes the hiest adventure that ever any knight saw.' Anon sir Galahad armed him, and bad the gentlewoman goe, and hee would follow there as shee liked.

CHAP. LXXXII.—*How sir Galahad rode with a damosell, and came into a shippe where as sir Bors and sir Percivale were in.*

SO the damosell rode as fast as her palfrey might gallop, til that shee came to the sea that was called Collibe. And at night they came unto a castle in a valley, that was closed with running water, and with high and strong wals. And she entred into the castle with sir Galahad, for the lady of that castle was

¹ *Leach*.—A physician.

² *Carboneke*.—Carboneck, Caxton.

the damosels lady. So hee eate and slept a while, till that the maide called him, and armed him by torch-light; and when the maide and hee were both horsed, the lady tooke sir Galahad a faire shield and a rich. And so they rode till they came to the sea-side, and there they found the ship where sir Bors and sir Percivale were in, the which cried on the ship-board, 'Sir Galahad, ye be welcome, wee have abiden you long.' And then they left their horses and made a crosse on them, and so entred into the ship. And the two knights both received them with great joy, and everyeach knew other, and told of their severall adventures. 'Ah, sir Galahad,' said sir Bors, 'if that sir Launcelot your fater were here, then were we well at ease, for then me seemeth we should lacke nothing.' 'That may not be,' said sir Galahad, 'but if it please our Lord.' And by then the ship went from the land of Logris¹, and by adventure it arrived up betweene two rokes passing great and mervailous, but there they might not land, for there was a swallow of the sea², save there was another ship, and upon it they might goe without danger. 'Go we thither,' said the gentlewoman, 'and there shall wee see adventures, for so it is our Lords will.' Then said the gentlewoman, 'Percival, wot ye what I am?' 'Certainly,' said he, 'not to my witting³.' 'Wit ye well,' said shee, 'I am thy sister, that am daughter of king Pellinore, and therefore wit yee well that yee are the man in the world that I most love; and if yee bee not in perfect beleefe of Jesu Christ, enter not in no manner of wise, for then should ye perish in the ship, which is faith, for it is so perfect it will suffer no sinne in it.' Then said sir Percivale, 'Faire sister, I shal enter therein, for if I be a misse creature or an untrue knight, ther shall I perish.'

CHAP. LXXXIII.—*How sir Galahad entred into the ship, and of a faire bed that was therein, with other mervailous things, and of a sword.*

IN the meane while sir Galahad blessed him, and entred therein, and then next the gentlewoman, and then sir Bors and sir Percivale. And when they were therein, they found it so mervailous faire and rich, that they had great mervaille thereof. And in the midst of the ship was a faire bed, and sir Galahad went thereto, and found there a crowne of silke, and at the feete was a sword faire and rich, and it was drawne out of the scabbard halfe a foote and more, and the sword was of divers fashions, and the pummell was of stone, and there was in it all manner of coulours that any man might find, and every

¹ *Logris*.—Loegria, the name given, as has been stated before, to that part of our island which was occupied by the Teutonic invaders, and is now called England.

² *Swallow of the sea*.—A whirlpool.

³ *Witting*.—Knowing.

one of the coulours had divers vertues, and the scales of the haft were of two ribs of divers beasts : and no hand that handleth it shall ever be weary or hurt. And as for this sword, there shall never no man begripe it the handle but one, but he shall passe all other. 'In the name of God,' said sir Percivale, 'I shall assay to handle it.' So he set his hand to the sword, but he might not begripe it. Sir Bors set his hand to it, and failed. Then sir Galahad beheld the sword, and saw the letters as red as blood, that said, 'Let see who shall assay to draw me out of my scabbard, but if he bee more hardier then other, and who that draweth mee, wit ye well that he shall never faile of shame of his body or be wounded unto the death.' 'By my faith,' said sir Galahad, 'I would draw this sword out of the scabbard, but the offending is so great that I shall not set my hand thereto.' 'Now, sir,' said the gentlewoman, 'wit yee well that the drawing of this sword is warned unto all men save unto you. Also this ship arrived in the relme of Logris, and that time was deadly warre betweene king Labor, which was father unto the maimed king, and king Hurlame, which was a Sarasin ; but then was he newly christned, so that men held him afterward one of the wittiest men of the world.

'And so upon a day it befell that king Labor and king Hurlame assembled their folke upon the sea where this shippe was arrived, and there king Hurlame was discomfited and all his men slaine, and hee was afeard to be dead, and fled to his ship ; and there hee found this sword, and drew it, and came out and found king Labor, the man in world of all Christendome in whom was then the greatest faith. And when king Hurlam saw king Labor, hee drew his sword and smote him upon the helme so hard that hee clave him and his horse to the earth with the first strooke of his sword. And when king Hurlame saw that this sword was so kerving, he returned againe to fetch the scabbard, and so cam into this ship, and entred and put the sword into the scabbard ; and as soone as hee had done so, hee fell downe dead before the bed. Thus, was the sword proved, that none that drew it but hee were dead or maimed.'

CHAP. LXXXIV.—*Of the mervailles of the sword and of the scabbard.*

AND then beheld they the scabbard, which seemed to be of a serpents skinne, and thereon were letters of gold and silver which said, 'Hee that shall weld mee ought to bee more hardier then any other, if that hee beare me as truly as I ought to be borne ; for the body of him which I ought to hang by, hee shall not be shamed in no place while hee is girded with this girdle, nor never none shall be so hardy to doe away this girdle, for it ought not to bee done away

but by the hands of a maide, and that shee be a kings daughter and a queenes.' 'Sir,' said sir Percivale, 'turne this sword, that wee may see what is on the other side,' and it was as red as blood with blacke letters as any cole, which said, 'He that shal praise me most, most shall he find mee to blame at a great necessitie, and to whom I shall be most debonaire shall I be most felon, and that shall be at one time.' 'Faire brother,' said she unto sir Percivale, 'it befell about fortie yeare after the passion of our Lord Jesu Christ, that Nacien, the brother-in-law of king Mordrains, was borne into an isle in the parts of the west, that men call the Isle of Turnance. So it befell that hee found this ship at the entre of a roch; but he had not so much hardnesse to drawe the sword. And at the ninth day there fell a great wind, that brought him to another ile by a roch, and there hee found the greatest giaunt that ever man saw. Therewith came that horrible giaunt for to sley him; and then he ranne to this sword, and, when he saw it naked, hee praised it much, and then hee shooke it, and therewith he bracke it in the middes. "Ah," said Nacien, "the thing that I most praised ought I now most to blame." And therewith hee threw the pieces of the sword over this bed.

'And then hee fought with the giaunt, and slew him. And anon hee entred into the ship againe, and then by adventure hee came unto another ship whereas king Mordrains was in, the which had beene tempted full evill with a feend in the port of a perillous roch; and, when the one saw the other, either told other of their adventures, and how the sword failed him at the most need. When king Mordrains saw the sword, he praised it much, "but the breaking was not to doe but by wickednesse of thy selfe, for thou art in some sinne." And there hee tooke the sword, and set the peeces together, and they sodred together as faire as ever they were before; and there he put the sword in the scawberde, and laid it downe upon the bed. Then heard they a voice that said, "Go out of this ship, for if yee be found in deadly sinne yee may not escape, but perish." And so they went into the other ship. And as Nacien went over the board, he was smitten with a sword on the right foote; and then ther came a voice and said, "Take thou that for thy forfit that thou didst in drawing of this sword, therefore thou receivest a wound, for thou were never worthy to handle it, the writing maketh mention." 'In the name of God,' said sir Galahad, 'yee are right wise in these works.'

CHAP. LXXXV.—*How king Pelles was smitten through both the thighs because he drew the sword, and of mervailous histories.*

'SIR,' said shee, 'ther was a king that hight Pelles the maimed king, and, while hee might ride, hee supported much Christendome and the holy church. So upon a day king Pelles was hunting, and hee and one of his knights lost the fellowship of hunters and their hounds: and anon they found the ship. King Pelles saw the letters and understood them, yet hee entered, but his knight had no hardinesse to enter. When the king found the sword hee drew it out as much as you may see; so therewith entred a speare, which smote him through both his thighs; and never sith may hee be healed before wee come to him. Thus was king Pelles, your grandsire, sir Galahad, maimed for his hardinesse.' So they went toward the bed, and above the beds head there hung two faire swords. Also there were two spindels, which were white as snow, and there were other that were red as blood, and other greene as emeraud. 'These spindels,' said the damosell, 'were when sinfull Eve' came to gather fruite, for which Adam and shee were put out of Paradise. Shee tooke with her the bough on which the aple hung. Then perceived shee that the braunch was faire and greene, and she remembred her of the losse that came from the tree, then she thought to keepe the braunch as long as shee might; and because shee had no coffor to keepe it in, shee put it into the ground. So by the will of our Lord the braunch grew to a great tree within a little while, and was as white as any snow, braunches, boughs, and leaves, that it was a token a maide planted it. But after awhile the tree that was white became as greene as grasse, and all that came of it. And so it befell many dayes after, under the same tree, Cain slew his brother Abell, whereof befell full great mervaille; for anon as Abell had received the death under the greene tree, it lost the greene colour and became red, and that was in tokning of the blood; and anon all the plants died thereof, but the tree grew and waxed mervailous faire, and so died the plants that grew out of it before the time that Abell was slaine under it. So long endured the tree till that Salomon, king Davids sonne, reigned and held the land after his father. This Salomon was wise and knew the vertues² of stoness and of trees, and so hee knew

¹ *Sinfull Eve*.—There are several mediaeval legends relating to Adam and Eve, most of which are probably of eastern origin. According to one, a well known legend, the slip of the tree of knowledge which Eve took out of Paradise and planted, produced the timber of which the cross was made.

² *Vertues*.—It is perhaps hardly necessary to state that during the Middle Ages, in the West as well as in the East, Solomon was looked upon as the prince of natural philosophers and magicians, and that various treatises on the virtues of precious

the course of the starres, and many other things. So on a day a voice called to him, "Salomon, if heavynesse come unto a man by a woman, ne recke thou never; for yet shall there come a woman wherof there shall come greater joy unto man an hundred times more then the heavynesse giveth sorrow, and the same woman shall be borne of thy linage; and the last of your blood, and he shall be as good a knight as was duke Josue, thy brother-in-law.

CHAP. LXXXVI.—*How Salomon tooke Davids sword by the counsaile of his wife, and of other mervailous matters.*

"**N**OW have I certified thee of that thou stoodest in doubt." Then was Salomon glad that there should come such a one of his linage, but ever hee mervailed and studied who that should bee, and what his name might bee: and hee told his wife all together how the voice told him. "Sir," said shee, "sithence it is so that this knight ought to passe all other knights of chivalry which have beene before him, and also that shall come after him; yee shall goe into our lords temple, whereas is king Davids sword, your father, the which is the marvailest and the sharpest that ever was taken in any knights hand; therefore take that, and take ye off the pomell, and thereto make yee a pomell of precious stones; and after make an hilt so mervailously and wonderously that no man may know it; and after make a mervailous sheath; and I shall let make a girdle thereto, such as shall please you." And a shippe was made of the best wood and most durable that men may find; and the lady let make a great bed and mervailous rich, and laid the sword at the beds feete; and the girdles were of hempe. And therewith was the king angry. "Sir, wit yee well," said shee, "that I have none so high a thing that were worthy to sustaine so big a sword, and a maide shall bring other knights thereto, but I wot not when it shal bee, nor what time." And there she let make a covering to the ship, of cloth of silke that shall never rot for no manner of weather. Yet went that lady and made a carpenter to come to that tree which Abell was slaine under. "Now," said she, "carve me out of this tree, which our first mother planted, as much wood as will make me a spindell." Anon, as the carpenter began to worke, there came out droops of blood, and then would he have left, but shee would not suffer him. And so hee tooke away as much wood as might well make a spindell; and as much of the green tree and

stones, on talismans, on the interpretation of dreams, &c., were ascribed to him and circulated under his name.

of the white tree. And when these three spindels were shapen, shee made them to bee fastned on the seeler¹ of the bed. "Now let it be," said she to king Salomon, "for ye shall heare tidings sooner then yee weene."

CHAP. LXXXVII.—*Of the wonderfull tale of king Salomon and his wife.*

THAT night lay king Salomon before the ship, with a small fellowship. And when king Salomon was on sleepe, him thought there came from heaven a great company of angels, and alighted into the ship, and tooke water, which was brought by an angell in a vessell of silver, and besprent all the shippe; and after hee came to the sword, and drew letters in the hilts, and after went to the ships board, and wrote there other letters, which said, "Thou man that wilt enter within me, beware that thou be full within of faith, for I am but faith and beleewe." And then a little voice said, "Salomon, the last knight of thy lineage shall rest in this bed." Then went king Salomon and awaked his wife, and told her the adventures of the ship.

'Now,' said sir Galahad, 'where shall wee find the gentlewoman that shal make new girdles to the sword?' 'Faire sir,' said sir Percivales sister, 'dismay you not, for by the leave of God I shall let make a girdell to the sword, such a one as shall belong thereto.' And then shee opened a boxe, and tooke out girdles which were seemely wrought with golden threds, and thereupon were set full of precious stones, and a rich buckell of gold. 'Loe, lords,' said the gentlewoman, 'here is a girdell that ought to be set about the sword; and wit yee well that the greatest part of this girdell was made of my haire, the which I loved full well while I was a woman of the world; but as soone as I wist that this adventure was ordained mee, I clipped off my haire, and made this girdell in the name of God.' Then they said unto sir Galahad, 'In the name of Jesu Christ, we pray you that ye gird you with this sword, which hath beene so much desired in the realme of Logris.' 'Now let me begin,' said sir Galahad, 'to gripe this sword for to give you courage; but wot yee well that it belongeth no more to mee then it doth to you.' And then he griped about it with his fingers a great deale, and then shee gird him about the middle with the sword. 'Now recke I not though I die, for now I hold mee one of the blessed maidens of the world, which hath made thee the worthiest knight of the world.' 'Faire damosell,' said sir Galahad, 'ye have done so much that I shall be your knight all the daies of my life.' Then they went from

¹ *Seeler*.—The celure or canopy of the bed.

that ship, and went into the other ship; and anon the wind drove them into the sea a great pace, but they had no vitale. But it hapned that they came on the morrow to a castle that men call Carteloise¹, that was in the marches of Scotland.

CHAP. LXXXVIII.—*How sir Galahad and his fellowes came unto a castle, and how they were fought withall, and how they slew their enemies, and of other matters.*

SO it befel there came a squire by them, and asked what they were; and they said they were of king Arthurs court. 'Is that soth?' said he. 'Now by my head,' said hee, 'ye are evill arived.' And then returned he againe unto the chiefe² foretresse. And within a while they heard a horne blow. Then there came knights well armed, and bad them yeeld them, or else they would die. 'That yeelding,' said they, 'shall be noyous³ to you.' And therewithall they let their horses runne together; and sir Percivale smote the formost to the earth, and tooke his horse, and mounted upon him, and in likewise did sir Galahad; also sir Bors served another so, for they had no horses in the country, for they had left their horses when they tooke their ship in other countreys. And so when they were horsed, then they began to set upon them, and the knights of the castle fled into the strongest fortesse, and the three knights followed after them into the castle, and so they alighted on foote, and with their swords slew them downe right, and gat them into the hall. So when they beheld the great multitude of people which they had slaine, they held themselves great sinners. So came there out of a chamber a good man, which was a priest, and beare Gods body in a cup; and when he saw them which lay dead in the hall, he was al abashed, and sir Galahad put off his helme, and kneeled downe, and so did his two fellowes. 'Sir,' said they, 'have yee no dread of us, for we be of the court of king Arthur.' 'Truely,' said the good man, 'if yee might live as long as the world shall endure, ne might yee never have done so great an almes deede as this.' 'Sir,' said sir Galahad, 'I repent me much, in as much as they were christned.' 'Nay, repent yee not,' said hee, 'for they were not christned, and I shall tell you how I wot of this castle. Here was the earle Hernox but one yere, and he had three sonnes, good knights of armes, and a daughter, the fairest gentlewoman that men knew; so those three knights slew their sister and tooke their father and put him in prison, and wounded him nigh unto the death, but a cosin of hers rescowed him.

¹ *Carteloiss*.—Apparently another of the fabulous localities mentioned in this romance, for I can trace no such name on the borders of Scotland.

² *Chiefe*.—*Clyff fortesse*, Caxton.

³ *Noyous*.—Injurious.

And then they slew priests and clerkes, and made to beate downe chappels; and this same day their father sent for me for to bee confessed and houseled; but such shame had never man as I had this day with the three brethren. But the earle bad mee suffer, for hee said that they should no longer endure, for three servants of our Lord God should destroy them; and now it is brought to an end. And by this may ye wit that our Lord is not displeased with your deeds.' And then they brought the earle Hernox out of prison into the midst of the hall, which knew sir Galahad anon, and yet had he never seene him before but by revelation of our Lord.

CHAP. LXXXIX.—*How the three knights with sir Percivales sister came into the wast forrest, and of an hart and foure Lyons, and of other things.*

THEN began he to weepe ful tenderly, and said, 'Long have I abidden your comming, but for Gods love hold me in your armes, that my soule may depart out of my body in so good a mans armes as yee bee.' And then one said on high, that all heard it, 'Sir Galahad, well hast thou avenged mee on Gods enemies; now behoveth thee to goe to the maimed king, for hee shall receive by thee his health, the which had biden so long.' And therewith the soule departed from the body. Right so departed the three knights and sir Percivales sister with them; and so they came into a wast forrest, and there they saw before them a white hart which foure Lyons led. And so they rode after a great pace, till that they came to a valey, and thereby was an hermitage where as a good man dwelled, and the hart and the Lyons entred in also. And so they entred the chappell and heard masse; and they three saw the hart become a man, the which mervailed them, and set him upon the alter in a rich siege, and saw the foure Lyons chaunged, the one to the forme of a man, and the other unto the forme of a Lyon, and the third unto an eagle, and the fourth was chaunged unto an oxe. Then tooke they their siege where as the hart sate, and went out through a glasse window, and there was nothing perished nor broken. Then they went to the good man and praied him that hee would tell them the truth. 'Ah! lords,' said hee, 'yee are welcome, now wote I well yee bee the good knights the which shall bring the sancgreall to an end, for yee bee they to whome our Lord shall shew great secrets. And well ought our Lord bee signified unto an hart; for the hart when he is old he waxeth young againe into his white skinne. Right so commeth againe our Lord from death to live, for he lost earthly flesh, and for that cause appeared our Lord as a white hart without a spot. And the foure that were with him, is to understand the

four evangelists, which set in writing a part of Jesu Christs deeds that hee did sometime when he was among you an earthly man.' And then they joyed much, and dwelled there all that day; and on the morrow, when they had heard masse, they departed, and commended the good man unto God. And so they came unto a castle, and passed by; so there came a knight armed after, and said, 'Lords, hearken what I shall say to you.'

CHAP. XC.—*How they were desired of a strange custome, the which they would not obey, and how they fought and slew many knights.*

THEN said the knight, 'This maide that yee led with you shall not escape mee before shee have yealded the custome of the castle'.¹ 'Let her goe,' said sir Percivale, 'yee bee not wise, for a maide in what place so ever shee commeth she is free.' So in the meane while there came out of the castle a ten or twelve knights armed, and with them came a gentlewoman which held a dish of silver; and then they said, 'This gentlewoman must yeald us the custome of this castle.' 'Sir,' said a knight, 'what maide that passeth hereby shall give this dishfull of blood of her right arme.' 'Blame have yee,' said sir Galahad, 'that brought up such customes, and so God me save, I ensure you that of this gentlewoman yee shall faile as long as I live.' 'So God mee helpe,' said sir Percivale, 'I had leaver bee slaine.' 'And I also,' said sir Bors. 'By my faith,' said the knight, 'then shall yee die, for yee may not endure against us, though yee were the best knights of the world.' Then let they runne each to other, and the three fellowes beate the ten knights, and slew them. Then there came out of the castle well a three score knights all armed. 'Faire lords,' said the three fellowes, have mercy upon your selfe, and have not to do with us.' 'Nay, faire lords,' said the knights of the castle, 'wee counsaile you to withdraw you, but we must needs have the custome.' 'Certainly,' said sir Galahad, 'for nought speake yee.' Then began they to meddle together, and sir Galahad with the strange girdels drew his sword, and smote on the right hand and on the left hand, and slew whom that would abide him; and his two fellowes holpe² him passingly well, and so they held their journey³ everieach in like hard till that it was night; then must they needes depart. So there came a good knight, and said to the three fellowes, 'If ye will come in to night, and take such harbour as here is, ye shall be right welcome; and we shall ensure you by the faith of our bodies,

¹ *Custome of the castle.*—We have had a similar custom alluded to before; see book i. p. 95.

² *Holpe.*—Helped.

³ *Journey.*—A day of battle.

as we are true knights, to leave you in such estate to morrow as we find you, without any falshood; and as soone as ye know of the custome, we dare say that ye will accord thereto.' 'Goe we,' said sir Galahad. And so they entred into the castle; and when they were alighted, they made of them great joy. So within a while the three knights asked the custome of the castle, and wherefore it was. 'What it is,' said they, 'we will say you the truth.

CHAP. XCI.—*How sir Percivales sister bled a dish full of blood for to heale a gentlewoman, whereof she died, and how the body was put into a ship.*

'THERE is in this castle a gentlewoman which wee have, and this castle is hers, and many other moe: so it befell many yeares agoe, there fell upon her a malady, and when shee had layen a great while she fell to a mesell¹, and of no leach² she could have no remedy, but at the last an old man said, "And she might have a dish full of the blood of a maide and a kings daughter, that blood would be her health, and for to anoynt her therewith." And for this thing was this custome made.' 'Now,' said sir Percivales sister, 'faire knights, I see well that this gentlewoman is but dead, but if she have so much of my blood.' 'Certainly,' said sir Galahad, 'and if yee bleede so much, yee may die.' 'Truely,' said shee, 'and I die for to heale her, then shall I get mee great worship and soule health, and worship unto my linage; and better is one harme than twaine; and therefore there shall bee no more battaile, but to morrow I shall yeeld you the custome of the castle.' All that night were the three fellowes eased with the best, and on the morrow they heard masse; and sir Percivales sister bad bring forth the sick lady; so she was brought fourth before her, which was full evill at ease. Then said shee, 'Who shall let me blood?' So anon there came one forth to let her blood, and shee bled so much that the dish was full. Then shee lift up her hand and blessed her; and then shee said unto the lady, 'Madame, I am come to my leath to make you whole, for Gods love pray for me.' With that shee fell in a sowne. Then sir Galahad, sir Percivale, and sir Bors start up to her and lift her up, and stenchd her blood; but shee had bled so much that she might not live. Then, when shee was awake, shee said, 'Faire brother sir Percivale, I must die for the healing of this lady, so I require you that ye bury not me in this countrie, but as soone as I am dead put me in a boate at the next haven, and let mee goe: my adventure will leade mee; and as soone as yee three come

¹ *Mesell.*—A leper.

² *Leach.*—A physician.

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to the citie of Sarras¹, there to achieve the holy grale, yee shall find me under a toure arived, and there bury me; and there shal sir Galahad be buried, and ye also in the same place.' So when sir Percivale understood these words, he graunted it her weeping. And then said a voice, 'Lords and fellowes, to morrow at prime ye three shall depart from other till the adventure bring you unto the maimed king.' Then asked shee her Saviour², and as soone as shee had received him, the soule departed from the body. So the same day was the lady healed when shee was enoynted withall. Then sir Percivale made a letter of all that she had holpen them as in strange adventures, and put it in her right hand, and so laid her in a barge, and covered it with silke; and so the wind arose, and drove the barge from the land, and all knights beheld it till it was out of their sight. Then they drew all unto the castle. Then they saw before them a knight armed and wounded hard in the body and in the head, that said, 'Oh Lord God, succour me, for now it is neede.' After this knight came another knight and a dwarfe, which cried to him as farre, 'Stand, yee may not escape.' Then the wounded knight held up his hands unto God that he should not die in such tribulation. So sir Bors tooke his horse, and commended him to God, and rode after to rescue the wounded knight.

CHAP. XCII.—*How sir Galahad and sir Percivale found in a castle many tombs of maidens that had bled to death.*

THE story saith, that all night sir Galahad and sir Percivale were in a chappell in their prayers for to save sir Bors. So on the morrow they dressed them in their harneis toward the castle, for to wit what was betide of them therein. And when they came there, they found neither man nor woman but that they were dead by the vengeance of the Lord. With that they heard a voice, which said, 'This vengeance is for blood shedding of maidens.' Also they found at the end of the chappell a church-yard, and therein might they see fortie³ faire tombs; and that place was so faire and so delectable, that it seemed them there had beene no tempest, for there lay the bodies of all the dead maidens which were martyred for the sicke ladies sake; also they found the name of every-each of them, and of what blood they were come, and were all of kings blood, and twelve of them were kings daughters. Then they departed, and went into a forrest. 'Now,' said sir Percivale unto sir Galahad, 'wee must depart, so pray

¹ *Sarras*.—See before, p. 400 of the present book.

² *Her Saviour*.—The sacrament. See before, the note on p. 403.

³ *Fortie*.—*A thre score*, Cantton.

we our Lord that we may meete together in short time.' Then took they off their helmes, and kissed together, and wept at their departing.

CHAP. XCIII.—*How sir Lancelot entred into the ship where sir Percivales sister lay dead, and how he met with sir Galahad his sonne.*

THE story saith, that when sir Launcelot was come to the water of Morteise hee was in great perill, and so he laid him downe and slept, and tooke his adventure that God would send him. So when he was asleepe, there came a vision unto him, and said, 'Launcelot, arise up and take thine armour, and enter into the first ship that thou shalt find.' And by adventure hee came by a strand, and found a ship the which was without saile or ores; and as soone as hee was within the ship, there hee felt the most sweetest savour that ever he felt, and hee was fulfilled with all things that hee thought on or desired. And so in this joy he laid him downe on the ship-board, and slept till day light. And when hee awoke, he found there a faire bed, and therein lying a gentlewoman dead, the which was sir Percivales sister. And as sir Launcelot beheld her, he espied in her right hand a writing, the which hee red, wherein he found all the adventures as ye have heard before, and of what linage shee was come. So with this gentlewoman sir Launcelot was a moneth and more.

So upon a night hee went to play him by the waters side, for hee was somewhat weary of the ship, and then hee listned, and heard an horse come, and there a knight alighted, and went to the shippe. Then when the knight saw sir Launcelot he saluted him, and asked his name. 'Truely,' said sir Launcelot, 'my name is sir Launcelot du Lake.' Then said sir Galahad, 'Yee be welcome, for yee be my father.' 'Ah,' said sir Launcelot, 'are ye sir Galahad?' Then sir Galahad kneeled downe and asked his blessing; and after tooke off his helme and kissed him; and there was greates joy between them. And there everyeach told other of their adventures, and anon as sir Galahad saw the gentlewoman dead in the bed, hee knew her well enough, and told great worship of her. 'Truely,' said sir Launcelot, 'never till now knew I of so high adventures done, and so mervailous and strange.' So dwelled sir Launcelot and sir Galahad within that ship halfe a yeare.

CHAP. XCIV.—*How a knight brought unto sir Galahad an horse, and bad him come from his father sir Launcelot.*

SO after, upon a Munday, it befell that they arrived in the edge of a forrest before a crosse of stone; and then saw they a knight armed all in white, who led in his right hand

a white horse; and so hee came to the ship, and saluted the two knights upon the high Lords behalfe, and said, 'Sir Galahad, yee have beene long enough with your father, come out of the ship and lepe upon this horse, and ride where the adventures shall leade thee in the quest of the sancgreall.' Then hee went unto his father, and kissed him full curteously; and so hee tooke his horse. And there they heard a voyce that said, 'Thinke for to doe well, for the one shall never see the other before the dreadfull day of doome.' 'Now, my sonne sir Galahad,' said sir Launcelot, 'sith wee shall depart, and never see other more, I pray unto the high Father of heaven for to preserve both you and me.' 'Sir,' said sir Galahad, 'no praier availeth so much as yours.' And therewith sir Galahad entred into the Forrest; and the winde arose, and drove sir Launcelot more then a moneth throughout the sea, where he slept but little, and prayed unto God that hee might have a sight of the holy sancgreall. So it befell upon a night at midnight hee arived afore a castle; and there was a posterne that opened toward the sea, and was open without any keeping, save two lions kept the entrie, and the moone shined cleare. Anon sir Launcelot heard a voice that said, 'Launcelot, goe out of this ship, and enter into the castle, where thou shalt see a great part of thy desire.' Then he went unto the gate and saw the two lions; then hee set hands to his sword and drew it; then came there sudainly a dwarfe, that smote him upon the arme so sore that the sword fell out of his hand. Then hee heard a voice that said, 'Oh man of evill faith and poore believe, wherefore beleevest thou more in thy harneis then in thy maker? for hee might more availe thee then thine armour, in whose service thou art set.' Then said sir Launcelot, 'Faire Father, Jesu Christ, I thank thee of thy great mercy that thou reprovest mee of my misdeede; now see I well that thou holdest mee for thy servant.' Then tooke hee againe his sword, and put it upon his shield, and made a crosse on his forehead, and came to the lions, and they made semblant to doe him harme, notwithstanding he passed by them without hurt, and entred into the castle to the chiefe foretresse, and there were they all at rest. Then sir Launcelot entred in so armed, and he found no gate nor doore but it was opened. And so at the last hee found a chamber whereof the doore was shut, and hee set his hand therto for to have opened it, but hee might not.

CHAP. XCV.—*How sir Launcelot was before the doore of the chamber wherein the holy sancgreall was.* •

THEN he enforced him much for to undoe the doore. Then he listned, and heard a voice which sung so sweetly, that it seemed none earthly thing, and him thought that the voice

said, 'Joy and honour be to the Father of heaven.' Then sir Lancelot kneeled downe before the chamber and prayed, for well hee wist that there was the sanggreall in that chamber. And with that he saw the chamber doore open, and there came out a great clearenesse, that the house was as bright as though all the torches of the world had beene there. So came hee to the chamber doore, and would have entred, and anon a voice said unto him, 'Flee, sir Launcelot, and enter not, for thou oughtest not to doe it, and if thou enter, thou shalt forethinke it.' And hee withdrew him backe, and was right heaue in his mind. Then looked hee up in the midst of the chamber, and saw a table of silver, and the holy vessell covered with red samite, and many angels about it, whereof one of them held a candell of waxe burning, and the other held a crosse and the ornaments of the alter. And above the priests hands there were three men, whereof the two put the youngest by likenesse betweene the priests hands, and so hee lift it up on high, and it seemed to shew so to the people. Right soo sir Launcelot entred into the chamber, and came toward the table of silver; and, when hee came nigh, he felt a breath, that him thought was entermedled¹ with fire, which smote him so sore in the visage, that him thought it all to-brent his visage, and therewith hee fell to the ground, and had no power to arise. Then felt hee many hands about him, which tooke him up, and beare him out of the chamber without any amending of his sowne, and left him there seeming dead to all the people. So on the morrow, when it was faire day-light, they within were arisen, and found sir Launcelot lying before the chamber dore, all they mervailed how hee came in. Then the one said he was alive, and the other said nay. 'In the name of God,' said an old man, 'for I doe you verely to wit he is not dead, but he is so full of life as the mightiest of you all, and therfore I counsaile you that hee bee well kept till God send him life againe.'

CHAP. XCVI.—*How sir Launcelot had layen twentie foure dayes and as many nights as a dead man, and of other matters.*

IN such a manner they kept sir Launcelot twentie foure dayes, and at the twentie-five day he opened his eyes, and he made great sorrow and said, 'Why have yee wakned me? for I was better at ease then I am now. I have seene so great mervailles that no tongue can tell, and more then any heart can thinke, and, if my sonne had not beene here before mee, I had seene much more.' Then they told him how hee had laine there twentie foure dayes and as many nights. Then

¹ *Entermedled.*—Intermixed.

him thought how it was a punishment for the twentie four yeares that he had beene a sinner, wherefore our Lord put him in penance twentie four dayes and nights. Then said they all hee was in the castle of Carboneck. Therewith came a gentlewoman, and brought him a shirt of fine linnen cloth, but hee chaunged not there, but tooke the haire to him againe. 'Sir,' said they, 'the quest of the sancgreall is achieved right now in you, that never shall ye see more of the sancgreall then ye have seene.' And therewith hee tooke the haire and clothed him in it, and above that he put a linnen shert, and after a robe of scarlet fresh and new. And when hee was so arrayed, they mervailed all, for they knew that hee was sir Launcelot the good knight; and then came word to king Pelles that the knight which had layen so long dead was sir Launcelot. Then was king Pelles wonderous glad, and went to see him. And there the king made great joy of him, and told him tidings that his faire daughter was dead, and sir Launcelot was right heavy of it. So king Pelles held sir Launcelot there four dayes, and as they sate at their dinner in the chiefe hall, then it was so that the sancgreall had fulfilled the table with all manner of meates that any heart might thinke. So as they sate, they saw all the doores and windowes of the place were shut without mans hand, whereof they were all abashed, and none wist what to doe. And then it hapned sodainely that a knight came unto the chiefe doore, and knocked mightily, and at the last the king himselfe arose, and came to a window where the knight called. Then he said, 'Sir knight, yee shall not enter while the sancgreall is here; for certainly ye be none of the knights of the quest, but one of them that hath served the feend, and hast left the service of our Lord.' 'Sir,' said the knight, 'I am of the countrey and realme of Logris, and my name is sir Ector de Maris, and brother unto the noble knight sir Launcelot.' 'In the name of God,' said king Pelles, 'me forethinketh that I have said, for your brother is here within.' And when sir Ector de Maris understood that his brother was there, for hee was the man in the world that he most dread and loved, and then hee said, 'Ah! Lord God, now doubleth my sorrow and shame; full truely said the good man of the hill unto sir Gawaine and me of our dreames.' Then went hee out of the court as fast as his courser might runne, and so throughout the castle.

CHAP. XCVII.—*How sir Launcelot returned toward Logris, and of other adventures that he saw in the way.*

AND then king Pelles came to sir Launcelot, and told him tidings of his brother. So sir Launcelot departed, and tooke his armour, and said that hee would goe see the realme

of Logris. And therewith hee commended the king unto God, and so rode through many realmes, and at the laste he came unto an abbey, and there he had great cheare. And on the morow hee found a rich tombe, which was newly made, and then hee tooke heed and saw the sides written with letters of gold, which said, 'Here lyeth king Bagdemagus of Gore, the which king Arthurs nephew slew,' and named him, sir Gawaine. Then was he not a little sory, for sir Launcelot loved him more then any other, and if it had beene any other then sir Gawaine hee should not have escaped from death. And on the morrow he turned to Camelot, where as hee found king Arthur and queene Guenever; but more than halfe of the knights of the round table were slaine. Then all the court was passing glad of sir Launcelot, and king Arthur asked him what tidings of his sonne sir Galahad. And there sir Launcelot told the king of his adventures, and also of the adventures of sir Galahad, sir Percivale, and sir Bors, which he knew by the letter of the dead damosell, and as sir Galahad had told him. 'Now would God,' said the king, 'that they were all three here.' 'That shall never bee,' said sir Launcelot, 'for two of them shall yee never see, but one of them shall come againe.'

CHAP. XCVIII.—*How sir Galahad came unto king Mordrains, and of other matters and adventures.*

NOW sir Galahad rode many journeys in vayne; and at the last he came unto the abbey where king Mordrains was, and when he heard that, he thought he would abide to see him. And on the morrow sir Galahad came unto king Mordrains, and anon the king saw him, which had lyen blind a long time. And then hee said, 'Sir Galahad, the servant of Jesu Christ, whose comming I have abidden long, now embrace me and let me rest on thy breast, so that I may rest betweene thine armes, for thou art as the floure of the lily, for the fire of the Holy Ghost is so taken in thee that my flesh, which was of dead oldnesse, is become young againe.' Then said king Mordrains, 'Faire Lord Jesu Christ, now I require thee that thou come and visite me.' And anon our Lord heard his praier; therewith the soule departed from the body. And then sir Galahad departed and came into the countrey of Gore, and into the abbey where sir Launcelot had beene before hand, and found the tomb of King Bagdemagus. But Joseph of Arimathies sonne was founder thereof. And there he found the tombe of Simeon, where sir Launcelot had failed. Then hee looked into a crofte under the minister, and there he saw a tombe the which burnt full mervailously. Then asked hee the brethren what it was. 'Sir,' said they, 'it is a mervailous

adventure that may not bee brought to an end, but by him that passeth of bountie and of knighthood al the knights of the round table.' And so they led him into a cave; and hee went downe upon a paier of stayers and came nigh the tombe; and then the flaming failed, and the fire stanchied, the which many a day had beene great. Then came there a voice that said, 'Much are yee beholden to thanke our Lord that hath given you a good houre that ye may draw the soules out of earthly paine and put them into the joyes of Paradise. I am of your kindred, the which hath dwelled in this heat these three hundred and foure and fifty yeares, for to bee purged of the sinne that I did to Joseph of Arimathy.' Then sir Galahad tooke the body in his armes, and beare it to the minster, and that night lay sir Galahad in the abbey; and on the morrow hee gave him service, and put him in the earth, before the highe aulter.

CHAP. XCIX.—*How sir Percivale and sir Bors met with sir Galahad, and how they came to the castle of Corbonek, and of other matters.*

SO departed hee from thence, and rode five dayes, till that hee came to the maymed king; and ever followed sir Percivale. So upon a day it befell that they came out of a great forrest, and there they met with sir Bors that rode alone. And then they told each other their adventures. Then rode they a great while, till they came to the castle of Corbonek; and when they were entred within the castle, king Pelles knew them all. Then was there made great joy, for hee knew well by their comming that they had fulfilled the quest of the sancgreall. Then Eliazar, king Pelles sonne, brought before them the broken sword, wherewith Joseph was smitten through the thigh. Then sir Bors set his hand thereto, if hee might have sodred it againe together, but it would not bee; then he tooke it to sir Percivale, but hee had no more power therto then hee. 'Now have yee it,' said sir Percivale unto sir Galahad, 'for and it bee ever achived by one bodily man, yee must doe it.' And then tooke he the peaces and set them together, and they seemed that they had never beene broken, and as well as it had beene first forged. And then they within espied that the adventure of the sword was achived; then they gave the sword unto sir Bors, for it might not bee better set, for hee was a full good knight and a worthy man. And anon light a voice among them that said, 'They that ought not to sit at the table of our Lord Jesu Christ arise, for now shall very¹ knights be fed.' So they went thence all save king Pelles and Eliazar his sonne, the which were holy men, and a maide which was his neece.

¹ *Very.*—True.

Anon they saw knights all armed come in at the hall doore, and did of their helmes and their harneis, and said unto sir Galahad, 'Sir. we have hied sore to be with you at this table, where the holy meate shall bee parted.' So three of them said they were of Gaule, and other three said they were of Ireland, and other three said they were of Denmarke. Therewith a voice said, 'There bee two among you that bee not in the quest of the sancgreall, and therefore depart yee.'

CHAP. C.—*How sir Galahad and his fellowes were fed with the sancgreall, and how our Lord appeared to them, and of other matters.*

THEN king Pelles and his sonne departed; and therewith there came foure angels from heaven, with a bishop, and the foure angels beare him up in a chaire, and set him downe before the table of silver, whereupon the sancgreall was, and he had in the midst of his forehead letters that said, 'See yee here Joseph the first bishop of Christendome.' Then the knights mervailed, for that bishop was dead more then three hundred yeares before. With that they heard the chamber doore open, and there they saw angels, and two beare candles of waxe, and the third a towell, and the fourth a speare which bled mervailously, that the drops fell within a boxe, the which he held with his other hand. And then they set their candles upon the table, and the third put the towell upon the vessell, and the fourth set the holy speare even upright upon the vessell. And then the bishop tooke a wapher¹, and at the lifting up thereof there came a figure of a child, that smote himselfe into that bread, so that they all saw that the bread was formed of a fleshly man. And then he put it into the holy vessell againe, and did that belonged unto a priest to doe at masse; and then hee went unto sir Galahad and kissed him, and then bad him goe and kisse his fellowes; and as he was bidden, so hee did. 'Now,' said he 'ye servants of Jesu Christ, ye shall be fed before this table with sweete meates that never no knights tasted.' Then looked they and saw a man come out of the holy vessell, that had all the signes of the passion of Jesu Christ bleding all openly, and said, 'My knights and my servants and my true children, which be come out of deadly life into spiritual life, I will now no longer hide mee from you, but yee shall see now a part of my secrets and of my hid things. Now hold and receive the hie meat which yee have so much desired.' Then tooke hee himselfe the holy vessell, and came to sir Galahad, and hee kneeled downe, and there hee received his Saviour, and so after him received all his felowes. Then hee said, 'Galahad, sonne, wotest thou what I hold between my hands?'

¹ A wapher.—A waddy, Caxton.

'Nay,' said sir Galahad, 'but if yee tell mee.' 'This is,' said hee, 'the holy dish wherein I eate the lambe on Sher-Thursday¹, and now hast thou seene that thou desirest most to see, but yet hast thou not seene it so openly as thou shalt see it in the cite of Sarras in the spirituell place. Therefore thou must goe hence, and beare with thee this holy vessell, for this night it shall depart from the realme of Logris, that it shall never bee seene more heere; and wotest thou wherefore? for it is not served nor worshipped to his right by them of this land, for they be turned unto evill living, therefore I shall disherite them. And therefore goe yee three to morrow unto the sea, where as yee shall find your ship ready. And with you take the sword with the strange girdels, and no more with you but sir Percivale and sir Bors. And also I will ye take with you of the blood of this spere for to anoint the maimed king, both his leges and all his body, and hee shall have his health.' 'Sir,' said sir Galahad, 'why shall not these other felowes go with us?' 'For this cause, for right as I departed mine apostles, one here and another there, so will I that yee depart. And two of you shall die in my service, but one of you shall come againe and tell tidings.' Then gave hee them his blessing, and vanished away.

CHAP. CI.—*How sir Galahad anoynted with the blood of the speare the maimed king, and of other adventures.*

THEN sir Galahad went anon to the speare which lay upon the table, and touched the blood with his fingers, and came to the maimed king and anoynted his legges. And therewith hee cloathed him anon, and start upon his feete out of his bed as an whole man, and thanked our Lord that he had healed him; and anon hee yeelded him unto a place of religion of white munkes, and was a full holy man. That same night about midnight there came a voice among them, that said thus, 'Mine owne sonnes and not my chiefe sonnes, my friends and not my warriours, goe yee hence whether ye hope best to doe, and as I bad you.' And anon in all hast they tooke their harneis and departed, but the three knights of Gaule, one of them hight Claudine, king Claudas sonne, and the other two were great gentlemen. Right so departed sir Galahad, and sir Percivale, and sir Bors with him; and so they rode three dayes, and then they found the ship, whereof the tale speaketh before. And when they came within bord, they found in the midst the table of silver which they had left with the maimed king, and the sancgreall, which was covered with red samit. Then were they passing glad for to have such things in their fellowship;

¹ *Sher-Thursday*.—The Thursday before Easter, called also Maundy-Thursday, by which name it is better known.

and so they entred, and made great reverence thereto, and sir Galahad fell in his prayers long time unto our Lord, that, at what time hee asked, hee might passe out of this world. And so much he prayed, till at the last a voice said to him, 'Galahad, thou shalt have thy request, and when thou askest the death of thy body thou shalt have it, and then shalt thou find the life of thy soule.' And then sir Galahad laid him downe, and slept a great while, and when hee awaked hee saw afore him the cite of Sarras. And as they would have landed, they saw the ship wherein sir Percivale had put his sister. 'Truely,' said sir Percivale, 'in the name of God, wel hath my sister held us covenant.' Then tooke they out of the ship the table of silver. And hee tooke it to sir Percivale and to sir Bors to goe before, and sir Galahad came behind; right so they went into the cite. And at the gate of the cite they saw an old man sit crooked. Then sir Galahad called him, and bade him helpe to beare this heavie thing. 'Truely,' said the old man, 'it is ten yeare agoe that I might not goe but with crutches.' 'Care thou not,' said sir Galahad, 'arise up, and shew thy good will.' And so he assayed, and found himselfe as whole as ever hee was; then hee ranne to the table, and tooke one part against sir Galahad. And anon there arose a great noyse in the cite, that a cripple was made whole by knights mervailous that were entred into the cite. Then anon after the three knights went to the water, and brought up into the pallace sir Percivales sister, and buried her as richly as a kings daughter ought to bee. And when the king of the cite, which was called Estourause, saw the fellowship, he asked them of whence they were, and what thing it was that they had brought upon the table of silver. And they told him the truth of the sancgreall, and the power that God had set there. Then the king was a tyrant, and was come of the linage of paynims, and tooke them and put them in prison in a deepe hole.

CHAP. CII.—*How they were fed with the sancgreall, while they were in prison, and how sir Galahad was made king.*

BUT as soone as they were there, our Lord sent them the sancgreall, through whose grace they were alway fulfilled¹ while they were in prison. So at the yeares end it befell that this king Estourause lay sicke and felt that hee should die; then he sent for the three knights, and they came before him, and he cried them mercie of that he had done to them, and they forgave him goodly, and he died anon. When the king was dead, all the cite was dismaid, and wist not who might bee their king. Right so as they were in counsaile together, there came a voice among them and bad them chose the

¹ *Fulfilled.*—Supplied with food to fullness.

youngest knight of them three to be their king, 'for he shall maintaine you and all yours.' So they made sir Galahad king by all the assent of the holy city, and else they would have slaine him. Now at the yeres end, and the same day after that sir Galahad had borne the crowne of gold, he arose up early and his fellowes, and came unto the palace, and saw before them the holy vessel, and a man kneeling in the likenesse of a bishop, which had about him a great fellowship of angels. And then he arose, and called sir Galahad, and said unto him, 'Come forth, the servant of Jesu Christ, and thou shalt see that which thou hast much desired to se.' And then sir Galahad began to tremble right sore when the deadly¹ flesh began to behold the spirituall things. Then he held up both his hands toward heaven, and said, 'Lord, I thanke thee, for now I see that which hath beene my desire many a day. Now blessed Lord, would I no longer live, if it might please thee good Lord.' And there with the good man tooke our Lords body betweene his hands, and proffred it unto sir Galahad, and he received it right gladly and meekly. 'Now,' said the good man, 'I am Joseph of Arimathie, which our Lord hath sent heere to thee to beare thee fellowship.' And when he had said these words, sir Galahad went to sir Percivale and kissed him, and commended him to God; and so he went to sir Bors, and kissed him, and commended him to God, and said, 'Faire lord, salute me to my lord sir Launcelot my father, and, as soone as yee see him, bid him remember this unstable world.' And therewith hee kneeled downe before the table, and made his praiers; and then sodainly his soule departed unto Jesu Christ, and a great multitude of angels beare his soule up to heaven, that his two fellowes might behold it. Also his two fellowes saw come from heaven an hand, but they saw not the body, and then it came right to the vessell, and tooke it and the speare, and so beare it up to heaven. Sithence was there never no man so hardy for to say that hee had seene the sancgreall.

CHAP. CIII.—*Of the sorrow that sir Percivale and sir Bors made when sir Galahad was dead, and of the death of sir Percivale, and of other matters.*

WHEN sir Percivale and sir Bors saw sir Galahad dead, they made as much sorrow as ever did two men; and the people of the countrey and of the citie were right heavy. And as soone as hee was buried, sir Percivale yeilded him to an hermitage out of the citie, and tooke a religious clothing, and sir Bors was alway with him, but he never changed his secular clothing, because he purposed him to go againe into the

¹ Deadly.—Mortal.

realme of Logris. Thus a yeaere and two moneths lived sir Percivale in the hermitage a full holy life, and then passed out of this world; and sir Bors let bury him by his sister and by sir Galahad in the spiritualities. When sir Bors saw that hee was in so farre countreys, as in the parts of Babilon, he departed from Sarras, and armed him, and came to the sea and entred into a ship; and so it befell him by good adventure to come into the realme of Logris, and then hee rode fast till hee came to Camelot, where king Arthur was. And when they had eaten, king Arthur made great clarkes to come before him, that they should cronicle the high adventures of the good knights. And anon sir Bors said unto sir Launcelot, 'Sir Galahad your sonne saluted you by me, and after you king Arthur and all the court, and so did sir Percivale, for I buried them with mine owne hands in the citie of Sarras. Also, sir Launcelot, sir Galahad praieth you for to remember this unsteadfast world, as yee behight him when yee were together more then halfe a yeaere.' 'This is full true,' said sir Launcelot, 'now I trust to God his praiere shall availle me.'

CHAP. CIV.—*Of the joy that king Arthur and queene Guenever had of the achivement of the sancgreall, and how sir Launcelot fell to his old love againe.*

NOW passing glad was the king and the queene of sir Launcelot and of sir Bors, for they had beene passing long away in the quest of the sancgreall. Then sir Launcelot began to resort unto queene Guenever againe, and forgot the promise and the profession that he made in the quest. And so they loved together more hotter than ever they had done before, that many in the court spake of it, and most specially sir Agrawaine, sir Gawaines brother, for he was ever open mouthed. And alwayes as much as hee might hee withdrew him from the company and fellowship of queene Guenever, for to eschew the slaunder and the noise; wherefore the queene waxed wroth and angry with sir Launcelot. And upon a day shee called sir Launcelot and said to him thus, 'Sir Launcelot, I see and feele daily that thy love beginneth to slacke, for thou hast no joye to bee in my presence, but ever thou art out of this court, and quarels and matters thou hast now adayes for ladies and gentlewomen, more then ever thou were wont to have in time past.' 'Ah! madame,' said sir Launcelot, 'in this yee must have me excused for divers causes; one is, that I was but late in the quest of the sancgreall, and I thanke God of his great mercy, and never of my deserving, that I saw in my quest as much as ever saw any sinfull man: and madame, wit yee well that there bee many men that speake of our love in this place, and have you and me greatly in awaite, as sir

Agravaine and sir Mordred; and wit yee well, madame, I dread them more for your sake then for any feare that I have of them my selfe, for that were me loth to see you dishonoured; and that is the cause that I take upon me more for to doe for damosels and maidens then ever I did before, that men should understand my joy and my delight is to have to doe for damosels and maidens.'

CHAP. CV.—*How the queene commanded sir Launcelot to avoid the court, and of the sorrow that sir Launcelot made.*

ALL this while the queene stood still, and let sir Launcelot say what hee would; and when hee had all said, shee brake out on weeping; and when shee might speake, shee said, 'Sir Launcelot, now I understand that thou art a false recreaunt knight, and therefore shall I never love thee no more, and I charge thee that thou never come more within this court, and I forbid thee my fellowship, and upon paine of thy head that thou see mee no more.' Right so sir Launcelot departed with great heavinesse. Then hee called sir Bors, sir Ector de Maris, and sir Lionell, and told them how the queene had forbidden him the court, and so hee was in will to depart into his owne countrey. 'Faire sir,' said sir Bors de Ganis, 'yee shall not depart out of this land by mine advise; yee must remember that women in their hastinesse will do oftentimes which sore repent them, and therfore by mine advise yee shall ride to the hermitage beside Windsore, which sometime was a good knight, whose name is sir Brasias, and there shall yee abide till I send you word of better tidings.' 'Yee say well,' said sir Launcelot, 'for now will I doe by your counsaile, and ride to the heremit sir Brasias, and there will I rest me untill I heere some manner of tidings from you. But, faire cosin, I pray you get me the love of my lady queene Guenever, and yee may.' 'Sir,' said sir Bors, 'yee neede not to move mee of such matters, for well yee wot I will doe what I may to please you.' And then the noble knight sir Launcelot departed sodainely with a right heavy cheere, that none earthly creature wist of him where he was become, but onely sir Bors.

CHAP. CVI.—*How at a dinner the which the queene made there was a knight poisoned, the which sir Mador laide upon the queene.*

AND then the queene let make a privy dinner in the citie of London unto the knights of the round table. And so these knights should dine with the queen in a privy place by themselves; and there was made a great feast of all manner of dainty meates and drinckes. But sir Gawaine had a custome that hee used daily at dinner and at supper, that hee loved well

all manner fruite, and in especiall apples and peares. And sir Pinell hated sir Gawaine because of his kinsman sir Lamoracke de Galis, and therefore, for pure envy and hate, sir Pinell poysoned certaine apples, for to poyson sir Gawaine withall. And so this was well unto the end of the meat. And so it befell by misfortune that a good knight named sir Patrice, cosin to sir Mador de la Port, tooke one of the poysoned apples; and when he had eaten it, hee swelled til he brast, and there sir Patrice fell downe dead sodainly among them. Then every knight lept from the board ashamed and enraged for wrath nigh out of their wits, for they wist not what to say; considering that queene Guenever made the feast and dinner, they all had suspection upon her. 'My lady the queene,' said sir Gawaine, 'wit ye well, madame, that this dinner was made for me, for all folkes understand well that I love fruit, and now I see well I had near beene slaine; therefore, madame, I dread me least yee will bee shamed.' 'This shall not bee ended so,' said sir Mador de la Port, 'for heere have I lost a full noble knight of my blood, and therefore upon this shame and despite I will bee revenged to the uttermost.' And thereupon sir Mador appealed queene Guenever of the death of his cosin sir Patrice. Then stood they all still, that none of them would speake a word against him, for they had a great suspection unto queen Guenever, because she let make the dinner. And the queene was so sore abashed that she could none otherwise doe but wept so heartely that she fell in a sowne. With this noise and sodaine crie came unto them king Arthur, and mervailed greatly what it might bee; and when hee wist of their trouble, and the sodaine death of that good knight sir Patrice, he was a passing heavy man.

CHAP. CVII.—*How sir Mador apeached the queene of treason, and there was no knight would fight for her at the first time.*

AND ever sir Mador stood still before king Arthur, and ever hee appealed queene Guenever of treason; for at that time that all manner of shamefull death was called treason. 'Faire lords,' said king Arthur, 'mee repenteth sore of this trouble, but I must be a rightful judge, and I may not doe battaile for my wife; and therefore I suppose that some good knight shall put his body in jeopardie for my queen rather then shee should be brent in a wrong quarrell; and therefore, sir Mador, desire thou the day of battell, and shee shall purvey her of some good knight which shall answere you, or else it were to mee great shame, and unto all my court.' 'My gracious lord,' said sir Mador, 'yee must hold me excused, for though ye be our king, in that degree ye are but a knight as we are; and there is none of the twentie knights that were bidden for to

come unto this dinner, but all they have great suspicion unto the queene. What say yee all, my lords?' Then they answered by and by, and said that they could not excuse the queene, for why, shee made the dinner, and either it must come by her or by her servants. 'Alas!' said the queene, 'I made this dinner for a good entent; so God helpe me in my right, as I was never purposed to doe such evill deedes, and that I report mee unto God.' 'My lord the king,' said sir Mador, 'I require you heartily, as yee be a righteous king, give mee a day that I may have justice.' 'Well,' said king Arthur, 'I give you day this day fifteene dayes, that yee be ready armed on horsebacke in the meadow beside Westminster; and if it so fall that there bee any knight to encounter with you, there may ye doe your best, and God speede the right; and if it so fall that there be no knight at that day, then must my queene be brent, and there shall shee bee ready to have her judgement.' So when the king and the queene were together, the king asked the queene how this case befell. Then answered the queene, 'So God me helpe, I wot not how nor in what manner.' 'Where is sir Launcelot?' said king Arthur; 'and he were here he would not grutch to doe battaile for you.' 'Sir,' said the queene, 'I can not tell you where hee is, but his brother and all his kindsmen deeme that hee is not within this realme.' 'Then I will counsaile you,' said the king, 'that ye goe unto sir Bors, and pray him to doe that battaile for you for sir Launcelots sake, and upon my life hee will not refuse you.' 'Alas!' said the queene, 'I can not doe withall; but now I misse sir Launcelot, for, and he were here, hee would put mee full soone unto my hearts ease.' 'Now goe your way,' said the king unto the queen, 'and require sir Bors to do battaile for you for sir Launcelots sake.'

CHAP. CVIII.—*How the queene required sir Bors to fight for her, and how hee granted her upon a condition, and how he warned sir Launcelot thereof.*

SO the queene departed from the king, and sent for sir Bors into her chamber, and besought him of succour. 'Madame,' said he, 'what would ye that I doe? for I may not with my worship have to doe in this matter, because I was at that same dinner, for dread that any of those knights would have me in suspicion. Therefore, madame, I greatly mervaile mee how yee dare for shame require mee to doe any thing for you, in so much as yee have chaced sir Launcelot out of your cuntry by whom we were borne up and honoured.' 'Alas! faire knight,' said the queen, 'I put mee wholly in your grace, and all that is done amisse I will amend as ye will counsaile me.' And therewith she kneeled downe upon both her knees, and besought sir Bors to have mercy upon her, 'or I shall have a shamefull

death, and thereto I never offended.' Right so came king Arthur, and found the queene kneeling before sir Bors. Then sir Bors tooke her up, and said, 'Madame, yee doe to me great dishonour.' 'Ah, gentle knight,' said king Arthur, 'have mercy upon my queene. that is now untruely defamed; and therefore, curteous knight, doe battaile for her, I require you for the love of sir Launcelot.' 'My lord,' said sir Bors, 'wit yee well if I graunt to doe battaile for the queene, I shall wrath many of my fellowshippe of the round table; but for my lord sir Launcelots sake, and for your sake, I will at that day be the queenes champion, unlesse that there come by adventure a better knight then I am to do battaile for her.' Then was the king and the queene passing glad, and thanked him heartily, and so departed. So then sir Bors departed secretly upon a day, and rode unto sir Launcelot, there as he was with the hermite sir Brasias, and told him of all his adventures. Then departed sir Bors from him, and came unto the court againe.

CHAP. CIX.—*How at the day sir Bors made him ready for to fight for queene Guenever, and how another discharged him when hee should fight.*

THE day came on fast untill the even¹ that the battaile should bee. Then the queene sent for sir Bors, and asked him how hee was disposed. 'Truly, madame,' said hee, 'I am disposed in likewise as I promised you, that is to say, I shall not faile you, unlesse by adventure there come a better knight then I to do battaile for you, then, madame, I am discharged of my promise.' And thus it past forth untill the morrow. And the king and the queene, and all the knights that were there at that time, drew them to the medow beside Winchester², where as the battaile should bee. And so when the king was come, with the queene, and many knights of the round table, then the queen was put there in the constables ward, and there was made a great fire about the iron stake, that, and sir Mador de la Port had the better, she should be brent.

So in the meane while came in sir Mador de la Port, and tooke his oath before the king, that queene Guenever did this treason unto his cosin sir Patrice, and unto his oath hee would prove it with his body, hand for hand, who that would say the contrary thereto. Right so came sir Bors de Ganis, and said that, 'as for queene Guenever, shee is in the right, and that will I make good with my hands, that she is not culpable of this treason that is put upon her.' 'Then make thee ready,' said sir Mador, 'and wee shal soone prove whether thou be in the

¹ *Even.*—i. e. the evening before the day; the eve.

² *Winchester.*—So also in Caxton; but evidently an error for *Westminster*.

right or I.' Then either departed to their tents, and made them ready to mount upon horsebacke as they thought best. And anon sir Mador de la Port came into the field with his shield on his shoulder, and a speare in his hand; and so rode about the place, crying unto king Arthur: 'Bid your champion come forth, and he dare.' Then was sir Bors ashamed, and tooke his horse, and came to the list end. And then was hee ware where as came out of a wood, there fast by, a knight all armed at all points upon a white horse, with a strange shield, and of strange armes; and he came riding all that he might runne; and so he came to sir Bors, and said, 'Faire knight, I pray you bee not displeased, for here must a better knight then yee are have this battaile; therefore I pray you to withdraw you, for I would yee knew I have had this day a right great journey, and this battaile ought to be mine, and so I promised you when I spake with you last. And with all my heart I thanke you for your good will.' Then sir Bors rode unto king Arthur, and told him how there was a knight come that would have the battell for to fight for the queene.

CHAP. CX.—*How sir Launcelot fought against sir Mador de la Port for the queene, and how he overcame sir Mador, and discharged the queene.*

THEN the king called unto that knight, and asked him if he would fight for the queen. Then he answered unto the king, 'Therefore came I hither, and therefore, sir king,' he said, 'tary me no longer, for I may not tary; for anon as I have finished this battail I must depart hence, for I have to doe many matters elsewhere.' Then said sir Mador de la Port unto the king, 'Now let me wit with whom I shall have to doe withall.' And then they rode to the lists end, and there they couched their speares, and ranne the one against the other with all their mights, and sir Madors speare brake all to peeces; but sir Launcelots speare held and beare sir Madors horse and all backward to the ground, and he had a great fall. But mightely and sodainely he avoided his horse, and bad that other knight alight and do battaile with him on foot. Then that knight discended lightly from his horse; and so they came egerly to battaile. Thus were they fighting nigh an houre, for this sir Mador was a ful strong knight, and hee smote that knight through the thigh, that the blood ranne out right fiersly; and when hee felt himselfe so wounded, hee gave him such a buffet upon the helme that hee fell flatling¹ to the ground, and therewith hee strod to him for to have pulled off his helme from his head. And then sir Mador praied that knight to save his life; and so hee yeilded him as an overcome knight, and released

¹ *Flatling*.—Prostrate.

the queene of his quarell. 'I will not graunt thee life,' said the knight, 'but onely that thou freely release the queene for ever, and that no manner of mention bee made upon sir Patrices tombe that ever queene Guenever consented to that treason.' 'All this shall bee done,' said sir Mador, 'and clearely I discharge my quarell for ever.' Then the knights parters¹ of the lists tooke up sir Mador, and led him to his tent, and the other knight went streight to the steire foote where as king Arthur sate, and by that time was the queene come unto the king, and either kissed other lovingly. And when the king saw that knight, hee stooped downe unto him and thanked him, and in like wise did the queene. And then the king praied him to put off his helme and to rest him, and to take a sop of wine; and then hee put off his helme to drinke, and then every knight knew that hee was the noble knight sir Launcelot. As soone as the king wist that, hee tooke the queene by the hand, and went unto sir Launcelot, and said, 'Gramercy of your great travaile that yee have had this day for mee and for my queene.' 'My lord,' said sir Launcelot, 'wit yee well that I ought of right ever to be in your quarel, and in my lady the queenes quarell, to doe battaile, for yee are the man that gave mee the high order of knighthood, and that day yee made mee knight, through my hastinesse I lost my sword, and my lady your queene found it, and lapped it in her traine, and gave me my sword when I had neede thereof, or else had I beene shamed among all knights. And therefore, my lord king Arthur, I promised her at that day ever to bee her knight in right or in wrong.' And then sir Mador was had to lechcraft; and sir Launcelot was healed of his wound. And then was there made great joy and mirth in the court.

CHAP. CXI.—*How the truth was knowne by the damosell of the lake, and of divers other matters.*

AND so it befell that the damosell of the lake, which was called Nimue, the which wedded the good night sir Pelleas, came to the court, and there she disclosed by whom sir Patrice was killed; and that the queene was never guilty. Then was it openly knowne that sir Pinell empoysoned the appels of the feast, to the entent to have destroyed sir Gawaine, because sir Gawaine and his brethren destroyed sir Lamoracke de Galis, to whome sir Pinell was cosin unto. Then was sir Patrice buried in the church of Winchester in a tombe, and therupon written: 'Here lieth sir Patrice of Ireland, slaine by sir Pinell le Savage, that empoysoned appels to have slaine sir Gawaine, and by misfortune sir Patrice eate one of those

¹ *Knights parters*.—The knights who had the direction of the arrangements of the battle.

appels, and then sodeinly hee brast.' And then sir Mador sewed daily and long to have the queenes good grace; and so, by the meanes of sir Launcelot, hee caused him to stand in the queenes grace, and all was forgiven. Thus it passed forth until our Lady day the Assumption; within fifteen dayes of that feast king Arthur let cry a great justs and turneyment that should bee at that day at Camelot, that is, Winchester¹. And the king let crie that he and the king of Scotland would just against all that would come against them. And when this crie was made thether came many knights. So king Arthur made him ready to depart to these justs, and would have had the queene with him, but at that time shee would not goe, shee said, for shee was sicke and might not ride at that time. And many deemed that the queen would not be there because of sir Launcelot du Lake, for sir Launcelot would not ride with the king; for hee said that hee was not hole of the wound the which sir Mador had given him. And so by the way the king lodged in a towne called Astolat, which is now in English called Gilford², and there the king lay in the castle. So when the king was departed, the queene called sir Launcelot unto her, and thus shee said, 'Sir Launcelot, yee are greatly to blame thus to hold you behind my lord; what trow yee what your enemies and mine will say and deeme?'

CHAP. CXII.—*How sir Launcelot rode to Astolat, and received a sleeve to beare upon his helme at the request of a maide.*

'**M**ADAME,' said sir Launcelot to the queene, 'I alow your wit, it is of late come sith yee were wise, and therefore as at this time I wil be ruled by your counsaile, and this night I will take my rest, and to morrow betimes will I take my way toward Winchester. But wit yee well, that at those justs I wil be against the king and all his fellowship.' And so on the morrow sir Launcelot went to the church and heard masse, and after brake his fast, and tooke his leave of the queene, and so departed. And then he rode so long till hee came to Astolat, that now is called Gilford, and ther it hapned him in the eventid he came unto a barons place which hight sir Bernard of Astolat; and as sir Launcelot entred into his lodging, king Arthur espied him as hee walked in a garden beside the castle, how he took his lodging, and knew him full well. And so the king smiled, and went to his lodging. So as sir Launcelot was in his lodging, and in his chamber unarming him, the old baron

¹ *That is, Winchester.*—See before, book i. p. 99.

² *Gilford.*—Guildford in Surrey is no doubt the place alluded to; but I am not aware that the name of Astolat, or Astolot (Caxton), is given to it in any authentic history.

and the hermite came unto him ; but the old knight knew not sir Launcelot. 'Faire sir,' said sir Launcelot to his hoost, 'I would pray you to lend me a shield that were not openly knowen, for mine is to much knowen.' 'Sir,' said his hoost, 'ye shall have your desire, for I have two sonnes which were but late made knights, and the eldest hight sir Tirre, and he was hurt the same day that he was made knight that he may not ride, and his shield ye shall have. And my yongest sonne hight sir Lavaine, and if it please you, he shall ride with you unto those justs ; and therefore I beseech you tell mee your name.' 'As for that,' said sir Launcelot, 'ye must hold mee excused as at this time, and if God give me grace to speede well at the justs, I shall come againe and tell you ; but I pray you heartely,' said sir Launcelot, 'in any wise let me have your sonne sir Lavaine with me, and that I may have his brothers shield.' This old baron had a daughter that time that was called the faire maide of Astolat, and her name was Elaine la Blaunch. So thus as shee came too and fro, shee was so hoot in her love for sir Launcelot that shee besought him to weare at the justs a token of hers. Then hee remembred him that hee would ride unto the justs disguised, and for because he had never before that time borne no manner of token of no damosell, then he bethought him that he would beare on of hers, that none of his blood thereby might know him. And then hee said, 'Faire damosell, I will graunt you to weare a token of yours upon my helmet, and therefore what it is shew me.' 'Sir,' said shee, 'it is a red sleeve of mine of scarlet, well embroadered with great pearles.' And so shee brought it him. So sir Launcelot received it, and said, 'Never or this time did I so much for no damosell.' And then sir Launcelot betooke the faire damosell his shield in keeping, and prayed her to keepe it untill he came againe. And so that night hee had merry rest and great cheere ; for ever the faire damosell Elaine was about sir Launcelot all the while that she might be suffered.

CHAP. CXIII.—*How the turnement began at Winchester, and what knights were at the justs, and of other matters.*

SO upon a day in the morning, king Arthur and all his knights departed, for the king had taryed there three dayes to abide his knights. And so when the king was riden, sir Launcelot and sir Lavaine tooke their leave of sir Bernard the old brron, and of his daughter the faire maide of Astolat. And then they rode so long till that they came to Camelot, which now is called Winchester. And so they sojourned there till our Lady Day the Assumption, as the great feast should

bee. So then trumpets began to blow unto the field, and king Arthur was set on high upon a scaffold to behold who did best. But king Arthur would not suffer sir Gawaine to goe from him, for never had sir Gawaine the better if sir Launcelot were in the field. And many times was sir Gawaine rebuked when sir Launcelot came into any justs disguised. Then some of the kings, as king Anguish of Ireland and the king of Scotland, were that time turned upon king Arthurs side. And then upon the other part was the king of Northgalis, and the king with the hundred knights, and the king of Northumberland, and sir Galahalt the haut prince. Then sir Launcelot made him ready, and put on his red sleeve upon his head and fastned it. And sir Launcelot and sir Lavaine departed out of Winchester prively, and rode unto a little leaved wood behind the partie that held against king Arthurs part, and there they held them still till the parties smote together. So there began a strong assaile on both parties. And then there came in the king of Scotland, king Anguish of Ireland, sir Brandiles, sir Sagamore le Desirous, sir Dodinas le Savage, sir Kay the seneshal, sir Grislet le fise de Dieu, sir Mordred, sir Meliot de Logris, sir Ozanna le Cueur hardy, sir Safire, sir Epinogris, and sir Galleron of Galway. All these fiteene were knights of the round table. So these, with other moe, came in together, and beate backe the king of Northumberland and the king of Walles.

CHAP. CXIV.—*How sir Launcelot and sir Lavaine entred into the field against them of king Arthurs court, and how sir Lancelot was hurt.*

‘NOW,’ said sir Launcelot, ‘and yee will helpe me a little, yee shall see yonder fellowship which chased now these men of our side, that they shall goe as fast backward as they went forward.’ ‘Sir, spare not,’ said sir Lavaine, ‘for I shall doe what I may.’ Then sir Launcelot and sir Lavaine came in at the thickest of the presse, and there sir Launcelot smote on the right hand and on the left hand, and by great force hee unhorsed many knights, and in like manner sir Lavaine strook downe severall: and the knights of the round table withdrew them backe, after they had gotten their horses, as well as they might. ‘O mercy, Jesu,’ said sir Gawaine, ‘what knight is that I see yonder that doth so mervailous deeds of armes in the fields?’ ‘I wote well who is that,’ said king Arthur, ‘but at this time I will not name him.’ ‘Sir,’ said sir Gawaine, ‘I would say it were sir Launcelot by the riding, and by his buffets that I see him deale; but alway me seemeth it should not bee hee, because he beareth the red sleeve upon the helme, for I wist him never yet beare token at no justs of lady nor gentlewoman.’ ‘Let him be,’ said king Arthur, ‘for he will be better known and doe more or he depart.’ Then the party

that were against king Arthur were well comforted, and then they held them together which before hand were sore rebuked. Then sir Bors, sir Ector de Maris, and sir Lionell called unto them the knights of their blood, and thrust in mightely, and thought to rebuke that noble knight sir Launcelot, and sir Lavaine, for they knew them not. And so they came hurtling together, and smote downe many knights of Northgalis and of Northumberland. And when sir Launcelot saw them fare so, hee gat a speare in his hand, and there encountred with them, all at once; Sir Bors, sir Ector de Maris, and sir Lionell smote him all at once with their speares.

And with force of themselfe they smote sir Launcelots horse unto the ground; and by misfortune sir Bors smote sir Launcelot through the shield into the side, and the speare brake, and the head abode still in the side. When sir Lavaine saw his maister lie upon the ground, he ranne to the king of Scotland and smote him to the ground, and by great force hee tooke his horse and brought him to sir Launcelot, and hee made him to mount upon that horse. And then sir Launcelot gat him a great speare in his hand, and there he smote sir Bors both horse and man to the ground; and in the same wise he served sir Ector and sir Lionell; and sir Lavaine smote downe sir Blamore de Ganis. And then sir Launcelot began to draw his sword, for he felt himselfe so sore hurt, that he wend to doe what hee might whiles hee might endure; and then hee gave sir Bors such a buffet that hee made him to bow his head passing low; and therewith all hee rased off his helme, and might have slaine him, and so pulled him downe. And in the same manner of wise hee served sir Ector and sir Lionell, for hee might have slaine them. But when he saw their visages his heart might not serve him thereto, but left them there lying. And then after hee hurled in among the thickest presse of them all, and hee pulled downe moe then thirty knights, and the most part were of the round table. And sir Lavaine did full well that day, for hee smote downe ten knights of the round table.

CHAP. CXV.—*How sir Launcelot and sir Lavaine departed out of the field, and in what jeopardy sir Launcelot was.*

'**A**H mercy, Jesu,' said sir Gawaine unto king Arthur, 'I mervaille what knight he is with the red sleeve.' 'Sir,' said king Arthur, 'hee will bee knownen or hee depart.' And then the king let blow unto lodging, and the prise was given by herawlds to the knight with the white shield and that beare the red sleeve. Then came the king with the hundred knights, the king of Northgalis, and the king of Northumberland, and sir Galahalt the haut prince, and said unto sir Launcelot, 'Faire

knight, God thee blisse, formuch have ye done this day for us, therefore wee pray you that yee will come with us that yee may receive the honour and the prise, as yee have worshipfully deserved it.' 'My faire lords,' said sir Launcelot, 'I pray you that yee will suffer mee to depart where me liketh, for I am sore hurt; I take no force of none honour, for I had lever to rest me then to be lord of all the world.' And therewith hee rode a great gallop away from them; and when he saw that hee was from the field nigh a mile, then said hee with a high voice, 'O gentle knight sir Lavaine, helpe me that this trunchion were out of my side, for it sticheth¹ so sore that it almost sleyeth mee.' 'O mine owne lord,' said sir Lavaine, 'I would faine helpe you, but it dreads me sore, and I draw out the trunchion, that yee shall bee in perill of death.' 'I charge you,' said sir Launcelot, 'as yee love mee, draw it out.' And therewith he disceded from his horse, and so did sir Lavaine, and foorthwith sir Lavaine drew the trunchion out of his side; and sir Launcelot gave a great shricke and a mervailous ghastly grone, and his blood brast out nigh a pinte at once, that at the last hee sanke downe and sowned paile and deadly. And sir Launcelot lay there nigh halfe an houer as he had been dead; and so at the last sir Launcelot cast up his eies, and said, 'O sir Lavaine, helpe mee that I were upon my horse, for heere fast by within these two miles is a gentle hermite, which sometime was a noble knight, and his name is sir Bawdewine of Britaine, and hee is a full noble surgion and a right good lech². Now let se, helpe me up, that I were there, for alway my hart giveth me that I shall not die of my cosin germaines hands.' And then with great paine sir Lavaine helpe him upon his horse, and then they rode unto that heremitage, the which was under a wood, and a great clyffe on the other side, and a faire water running under it. And then sir Lavaine beat on the gate with the end of his speare, and cried, 'Let me in for Christs sake!' And then came there a faire child to them, and asked them what they would. 'Faire sonne,' said sir Lavaine, 'goe and pray thy lord the hermit, for Gods sake, to let in heere a knight which is right sore wounded.' So the child went in lightly, and then came the hermite, that was a passing good man. Then sir Lavaine brought the hermit where as the most noble knight sir Launcelot was.

CHAP. CXVI.—*How sir Launcelot was brought unto an hermite for to be healed of his wound, and of other matters.*

AND when the hermite beheld him as he sat leaning upon his saddle-bow, ever bleeding piteously, and alway the knight hermit thought that he should know him, but he could

¹ *Stitcheth*.—Pains; properly, to give an acute pain, as the smart of a wound. Our *stitch* in the side is the same word.

² *Lech*.—A physician.

not bring him to knowledge, because hee was so pale for bleeding. Then the hermite saw by a wound on the cheeke that he was sir Launcelot. 'Alas!' said the hermite, 'mine owne lord, why hide yee your name from me? forsooth I ought to know you of right, for yee are the most noble knight of the world, for well I know you for sir Launcelot.' 'Sir,' said he, 'sith ye know me, helpe me and ye may, for Christs sake, for I would be out of this paine at once, either to death or to life.' And so the hermite and two of his servants beare sir Launcelot into the hermitage, and laid him in his bed. And then anon the hermite stenchd the blood; and then he made him to drinke good wine; so by that sir Launcelot was right well refreshed, and came to himselfe againe. For in those daies it was not the guise of hermites as it now is in these daies, for there were no hermites in those daies but that they had beene men of worship and of prowesse, and those hermites held great houtholds, and refreshed people that were in distres. Now turne we unto king Arthur, and leave we sir Launcelot in the hermitage. So when the kings were come together on both parties, and the great feast should be holden, king Arthur asked the king of Northgalis and his fellowship where was the knight that beare the red sleeve. 'Bring him before me, that hee may have his laude and honour and the prise, as it is right.' Then spake sir Galahalt the haut prince and the king with the hundred knights: 'Wee suppose that knight is mischieved, and that he is never like to see you nor none of us all, and that is the most greatest pittie that ever wee wist of any knight.' 'Alas!' said king Arthur, 'these be to me the worst tidings that came to mee this seaven yeare; for I would not for all the lands I have to know and wit it were so that noble knight were slaine.' 'By my head,' said sir Gawaine, 'if it be so that the good knight be so sore hurt, it is great damage and pittie to all this land, for hee is one of the noblest knights that ever I saw in a field handle a speare or a sword; and if he may be found, I shall finde him, for I am sure that he is not farre from this towne.' Right so sir Gawaine took a squire with him, and rode upon two hacknies all about Camelot within sixe or seaven mile; but as hee went so he came againe, and could here no word of him. Then within two dayes king Arthur and all the fellowship returned to London againe; and so as they rode by the way, it hapned sir Gawaine at Astolat to lodge with sir Bernard. And so as sir Gawaine was in his chamber for to take his rest, sir Bernard the old baron came to him, and also his faire daughter Elaine, for to cheere him, and to aske him what tidings he knew, and who did best at the turneiment at Winchester. 'So God helpe me,' said sir Gawaine, 'there were two knights which beare two white shields, but the one of them beare a red sleeve upon his head, and certainly he was one of

the best knights that ever I saw just in the field ; for that one knight with the red sleeve smote downe fortie valiant knights of the round table, and his fellow did right well and right worshipfully.' 'Now blessed bee God,' said the faire maide of Astolat, 'that the good knight sped so well.'

CHAP. CXVII.—*How sir Gawaine was lodged with the lord of Astolat, and ther hee had knowledge that it was sir Launcelot that beare the red sleeve.*

THEN shee told him as yee have heard before, and how her father betooke him her brother to doe him service, and how her father lent him her brother sir Tires shield, and heere with me hee left his owne shield.' 'For what cause did hee so?' said sir Gawaine. 'For this cause,' said the damosell ; 'for his shield was too well knownen among many noble knights.' 'Ah, faire damosell,' said sir Gawaine, 'please it you for to let me have a sight of that shield.' So when the shield was come, sir Gawaine tooke off the case, and when he beheld that shield he knew anon that it was sir Launcelots shield, and his owne armes. 'Ah Jesu, mercy!' said sir Gawaine, 'now is my heart more heavier than ever it was before. Is that knight that oweth that shield your love?' 'Yee truely,' said shee, 'my love he is, God would that I were his love.' 'God graunt,' said sir Gawaine, 'that either of you may rejoyce other, but that is in a great adventure. I have knowen that noble knight this foureteene¹ yeares, and never or that day did that knight beare token or signe of no lady, gentlewoman, nor maide, at no justs nor turneyment ; but I dread me yee shall never see him in this world, and that is great pittie as ever was of earthly knight.' 'Alas!' said she, 'how may this bee? is hee slaine?' 'I say not so,' said sir Gawaine, 'but wit yee well that hee is grievously wounded, and more likelier to bee dead then to bee alive, and wit ye well hee is the noble knight sir Launcelot, for by his shield I know him.' 'Now, faire father,' said Elaine, 'I require you give mee leave to ride and to seeke him, or else I wot well I shall goe out of my mind, for I shall never stint till that I have found him and my brother sir Lavaine.' So the maide made her ready before sir Gawaine, making great dole. Then one the morrow sir Gawaine came unto king Arthur, and told him how hee had found sir Launcelots shield in the keeping of the faire maide of Astolat. 'All that I knew,' said king Arthur, 'and that caused me I would not suffer you to have to doe at the great justs ; for I espied him,' said king Arthur, 'when he came into his lodging, full late in the eyening, in Astolat ; but mervaille have I,' said king

¹ *Foureteene.*—Four and twenty yere, Caxton.

Arthur, 'that ever he would beare any signe of any damosell, for or now I never heard say nor knew that ever he bear any token of no earthly woman.' 'By my head,' said sir Gawaine, 'the faire maide of Astolat loveth sir Launcelot mervailously well, but what it meaneth I cannot say; and shee is ridden after him for to seeke him.'

So king Arthur and all his court came to London, and there sir Gawaine openly disclosed unto all the court that it was the noble knight sir Launcelot that justed best.

CHAP CXVIII.—*Of the great sorrow that sir Bors made for the hurt of sir Launcelot, and of great anger that queene Guenever had because sir Launcelot beare the red sleeve.*

AND when sir Bors heard that, wit ye wel he was a heavie and a soorowfull man, and so were all his kinsmen. But when queene Guenever wist that sir Launcelot beare the red sleeve of the faire maide of Astolat, shee was nigh out of her minde for anger and wrath; and then shee sent for sir Bors de Ganis in all the hast that might bee. So when sir Bors came afore the queene, shee said unto him, 'Ah! sir Bors, sir Launcelot hath betraied mee when hee beare the red sleeve upon his head at Winchester at the great turnement?' 'Madame,' said sir Bors, 'that red sleeve bearing repenteth mee sore, but for this cause hee beare the red sleeve, that none of us that bee of his blood should know him. For or then we nor none of us all never knew that ever he beare token or signe of maide, lady, nor gentlewoman.' 'Fie on him!' said queene Guenever, 'for I heard sir Gawaine say before my lord Arthur that mervaille it were to tell the great love that is betweene the faire maide of Astolat and him.' 'Madame,' said sir Bors, 'I may not warne sir Gawaine to say what it pleased him, but wit yee well that I will hast me to seeke sir Launcelot and find him where so ever hee bee, and God send mee good tidings of him.'

And so leave wee them there, and speake we of sir Launcelot that lay in great perill. So as the faire maide Elaine came to Winchester, shee sought there all about, and by fortune sir Lavaine was riden to play him and to enchafe¹ his horse. And anon, as faire Elaine saw him, she asked her brother, 'How fareth my lord sir Launcelot?' Then shee told him how sir Gawaine by his shield knew him. So they rode together till they came unto the hermitage, and anon shee alighted; so sir Lavaine brought her unto sir Launcelot. And when shee saw him lie so sicke and pale in his bed, shee might not speake, but sodainly shee fell unto the ground in a sowne, and there shee

¹ To enchafe.—To heat.

lay a great while. And then sir Launcelot praied sir Lavaine to take her up and to bring her to him; and when shee came to her selfe againe, sir Launcelot kissed her, and said, 'Faire maide, and ye be come to comfort me, yee be right welcome, and of this little hurt that I have I shall bee full hastily hole by the grace of God. But me sore repenteth that my name is knowen, for I am sure that it will turne to anger.' And then sir Launcelot compassed in his mind that sir Gawaine would tell queene Guenever how hee beare the red sleeve and for whom, that he wist well that it would turne to great anger. So this maide Elaine never went from sir Launcelot, but watched him daie and night. Then sir Launcelot praied sir Lavaine to make espies in Winchester for sir Bors if he came there. 'For well I am sure,' said sir Launcelot, 'that sir Bors will seeke mee, for hee is the good knight that hurt me.'

CHAP. CXIX.—*How sir Bors sought sir Lancelot, and found him in the hermitage, and of the lamentation betweene them.*

NOW turne we unto sir Bors de Ganis, that came to Winchester to seeke after his cosin sir Launcelot. And then sir Lavaine came to Winchester and found sir Bors, and there he told him what hee was, and what his name was. 'Now, courteous knight,' said sir Bors, 'I require you that yee will bring me unto my lord sir Launcelot.' And so they departed, and came unto the hermitage; and when sir Bors saw sir Launcelot lie in his bed all pale and discoloured, for pitie he might not speake, but wept ful tenderly a great while. And then when hee might speake, hee said unto him thus, 'O my lord sir Launcelot, God bless you and send you hasty recovery, and full heavy am I of my misfortune and of mine unhappynesse, for now I dread and feare mee that God is greatly displeased with me, that hee would suffer me to have such a shame for to hurt you that are all our leader and all our worship, and therefore I call my selfe unhappy.' 'Faire cosin,' said sir Launcelot, 'let this speach overpasse, and all shall bee welcome that God sendeth, and let us leave of this matter, and let us speake of some rejoycing; for this that is done may not bee undone; and let us find some remedy how soone that I may bee hole.' Then sir Bors leaned upon his beds side, and there hee told sir Launcelot how the queene was passing wroth with him because he weare the red sleeve at the great justs. 'Then is the queene wroth,' said sir Lancelot, 'and therefore am I right heavy, for I deserved no wrath, for all that I did was because that I would not bee knowen.' 'Right so excused I you,' said sir Bors, 'but all was in vaine; for shee said more larglier to mee then I to you now. But is this shee,' said sir Bors, 'that is so busie about you, that men call the faire maide

of Astolat?' 'She it is,' said sir Launcelot, 'which by no manner of meanes I can put from mee.' And so they talked of many other things mo; and so within three or foure daies sir Launcelot was big and strong againe.

CHAP. CXX.—*How sir Launcelot armed him for to assay himselfe if hee might beare armes, and how his wound brake out againe.*

THEN sir Bors told sir Launcelot how that there was sworne a great turneyment and justs betweene king Arthur and the king of Northgalis, that should be upon Allhalowmasse day beside Winchester. Then they abode there almost a moneth together; and ever this faire maide Elaine did her diligence and labour night and day unto sir Launcelot, that there was never child more meeker unto the father nor wife unto her husband then was that faire maide of Astolat. So upon a day, by the assent of sir Launcelot, sir Bors and sir Lavaine made the hermite to goe seeke in woods for divers herbs, and so sir Launcelot made faire Elaine for to gather herbs for him to make him a baine¹. In the meane while sir Launcelot made him to arme him at all points², and there he thought for to assay his armour and his speare for his hurt or not. And when hee was upon his horse, hee spurred him fiersly, and his horse was passing lusty and fresh because hee was not laboured a moneth before. And therewith sir Launcelot strained himselfe with so great force for to get his horse forward, that his wound brake both within and without, and therewith the blood came out so fiersly that hee felt himselfe so feeble that hee might not sit upon his horse. And then sir Launcelot cried unto sir Bors, 'Ah! sir Bors and sir Lavaine, helpe mee, for I come unto mine end.' And therewith hee fell downe on the one side unto the ground like a dead corps. And then sir Bors and sir Lavaine came to him, making out of measure great sorrow, and so by fortune the maide Elaine heard their sorrow and dole, and then shee came thither. And when she found sir Launcelot there armed in the place, she cried and wept as she had beene wood, and then she kissed him and did what she might to wake him. With this came the holy hermit, and when hee found sir Launcelot in that plight hee said but little, but wit yee well hee was right wroth. And so they all beare him into the hermitage, and unarmed him and laide him in his bed, and evermore his wound bled piteously, but hee sturred no limme of his body. Then the knight hermit put a thing in his nose, and a little deale of water in his mouth, and then sir Launcelot waked out of his sowne. 'Ah! sir Launcelot,' said

¹ *Baine*.—A bath.

² *At all points*.—*At alle pyeces*, Caxton.

the heremit, 'your heart and your courage will never be done untill your last daie, but yee shall do now by my counsaile : let sir Bors depart from you, and let him doe at that turneyment what hee may; and by the grace of God, by that the turneyment be done, and ye come hither againe, sir Launcelot shall be as hoole as yee, so that hee will bee ruled by mee.'

CHAP. CXXI.—*How sir Bors returned, and told tidings of sir Launcelot, and of the turnement, and unto whom the prise was given.*

AND then sir Bors departed and came to the court of king Arthur, and told them in what place he had left sir Launcelot. 'That me repenteth,' said the king; 'but sith he shall have his life, we all may thank God.' And as All-hallowmas drew neere, thither came the king of Northgalis, and the king with the hundred knights, and sir Galahalt the haut prince of Surlus; and thither came king Anguish of Ireland, and the king of Scotland; so these three knights came on king Arthurs part. And so that day sir Gawaine and sir Bors did great deedes of armes; and therfore the prise was given betweene them both, for they began first and longest endured. Also sir Gareth did that day great deedes of armes, for he smote downe and pulled downe thirtie knights; but when he had done these deedes he taryed not, but so departed, and therefore he lost his prise. And sir Palomides did great deedes of armes that day, for hee smote downe twenty knights, but hee departed sodainly. And men deemed that sir Gareth and he rode together to some adventure.

So when this turnement was done, sir Bors departed and rode till he came to sir Launcelot his cosin; and then he found him walking on his feete, and there either made great joy of other. And so sir Bors told sir Launcelot of all the justs like as ye have heard. So then they made them ready to depart from the hermite. And so upon a day they tooke their horses and tooke Elaine le Blaunch with them; and when they came to Astolat, there they were well lodged and had greate cheare of sir Bernard the old baron and of sir Tirre his sonne. And so on the morrow, when sir Launcelot should depart, faire Elaine brought her father with her and her two brethren sir Tirre and sir Lavaine, and thus she said :

CHAP. CXXII.—*Of the great lamentation that the faire maide of Astolat made when sir Launcelot should depart, and how she died for his love.*

'MY lord sir Launcelot, now I see that yee will depart; faire and curteous knight, have mercy upon me, and suffer mee not to die for your love.' 'What would yee that I did?'

said sir Launcelot. 'I would have you unto my husband,' said the maide Elaine. 'Faire damosell, I thanke you,' said sir Lancelot; 'but certainly,' said hee, 'I cast mee never to bee married.' 'Alas!' said she, 'then must I needes die for your love.' 'Ye shall not,' said sir Launcelot, 'for wit yee well, faire damosell, that I might have beene married and I had would, but I never applyed mee to bee married; but wheresoever yee will set your heart upon some good knight that will wed you, I shall give you together a thousand pound yearly to you and to your heires; thus much will I give you, faire maide, for your kindnesse, and alway while I live to be your owne knight.' Then she shrieked shrilly¹, and fell downe to the ground in a sowne; and then gentlewomen beare her into her chamber, and there she made ever much sorrow. And then sir Launcelot would depart; and ther hee asked sir Lavaine what he would doe. 'What should I doe,' said sir Lavaine, 'but follow you, but if ye drive mee from you?' Then came sir Bernard to sir Launcelot, and said unto him thus, 'I can not see but that my daughter Elaine will die for your sake.' 'I may not doe thereto,' said sir Launcelot, 'for that me sore repenteth, for I report mee unto your selfe that my proffer is faire; and me repenteth that she loveth mee as shee doth; I was never the causer of it, for I report me unto your sonne, I early nor late proffered her bountie nor faire behests.' Then sir Launcelot tooke his leave, and so they departed, and came to Winchester. And when king Arthur wist that sir Launcelot was come hole and sound, the king made great joy of him, and so did sir Gawaine and all the knights of the round table, except sir Agrawaine and sir Mordred. And also queene Guenever was wood wroth with sir Launcelot, and would by no meanes speake with him, but estranged her selfe from him; and sir Launcelot made all the meanes that hee might to speake with the queene, but it would not be.

Now speake we of the faire maide of Astolate, which made such sorrow day and night that she never slept, eate, nor dranke; and alway she made her complaint unto sir Launcelot. So when shee had thus endured about ten dayes, that shee felt that shee must needs passe out of this world, then shee shrove her cleane, and received her creatour, and ever shee complained still upon sir Launcelot. And then shee called her father sir Bernard, and her brother sir Tirre, and heartely shee praied her father that her brother might write a letter like as she would endite it. And so her father graunted her. And when the letter was written word by word like as shee had devised, then shee prayed her father that shee might bee watched untill she were dead, 'And while my body is whole, let this letter be put into my right hand, and let me be

¹ *Shrilly*.—*Shryked skyrly*, Caxton.

put in a faire bed with all the richest clothes that I have about me, and so let my bed and all my rich clothes be laide with me in a chariot to the next place where as the Thamse is, and there let me bee put in a barge, and but one man with me, such as yee trust, to stere me thither, and that my barge be covered with black samite over and over. Thus, father, I beseech you let me be done.' So her father graunted her faithfully that all this thing should bee done like as shee had devised. Then her father and her brother made great dole, for, when this was done, anon shee died. And so when shee was dead, the corps was put in a barge on the Thamse, and so the man steered the barge to Westminster, and there hee rowed a great while to and fro or any man espied it.

CHAP. CXXIII.—*How the corps of the faire maide of Astolat arrived before king Arthur, and of the burying, and how sir Launcelot offred the masse peny*¹.

SO by fortune king Arthur and queene Guenever were speaking together at a window; and so as they looked into the Thamse, they espied the blacke barge, and had mervaille what it might meane. Then the king called sir Kay, and shewed him it. 'Go ye thither,' said the king unto sir Kay, 'and take with you sir Brandiles and sir Agravaine, and bring me ready word what is there.' Then these three knights departed, and came to the barge, and went in; and there they found the fairest corps lying in a rich bed that ever they saw, and a poore man sitting in the end of the barge, and no word would he speake. So these three knights returned unto the king againe, and told him what they had found. 'That faire corps will I see,' said king Arthur. And then the king tooke the queene by the hand and went thither. Then the king and the queene went in, with certaine knights with them, and ther they saw a faire gentlewoman lying in a rich bed; and all was of cloth of gold; and shee lay as though she had smiled. Then the queene espied the letter in the right hand, and told the king thereof. Then the king tooke it in his hand, and the king and the queene went out of the barge; and the king commaunded certaine men to waite upon the barge; and so when the king was come within his chamber, he called many knights about him, and said that hee would wit openly what was written within that letter. Then the king brake it open, and made a clarke to read it. And this was the entent of the letter:

'Most noble knight, my lord sir Launcelot du Lake, now hath death made us two at debate for your love; I was your lover, that men called the faire maiden of Astolat; therefore unto all

¹ *Masse peny*.—The offering at the altar.

ladies I make my moone; yet for my soule that yee pray, and bury me at the least, and offer ye my masse peny. Pray for my soule, sir Launcelot, as thou art a knight pearles.' This was all the substance of the letter. And when it was red, the queene and all the knights wept for pittie of the dolefull complaints. Then was sir Launcelot sent for. And when hee was come, king Arthur made the letter to be red to him. And when sir Launcelot had heard it word by word, hee said, 'My lord king Arthur, wit you well that I am right heavy of the death of this faire damosell; God knoweth I was never causer of her death by my will, and that I will report mee unto her owne brother, here hee is, sir Lavaine. I will not say nay but that shee was both faire and good, and much I was beholden unto her, but shee loved me out of measure.' 'Yee might have shewed her,' said the queene, 'some bountie and gentlenesse, that ye might have preserved her life.' 'Madame,' said sir Launcelot, 'shee would none other way bee answered but that shee would bee my wife, and of this I would not graunt her; but I proffered her, for her good love which she shewed me, a thousand pound yearly to her and her heires, and to wed any manner of knight that she could find best to love in her heart; for, madame, I love not to bee constrained to love, for love must arise of the heart, and not by constraint.' 'That is truth,' said king Arthur and many knights; 'love is free in himselfe, and never will be bound, for where hee is bound hee loseth himselfe.' Then said the king unto sir Launcelot, 'It will be your worship that ye oversee that shee bee buried worshipfully.' 'Sir,' said sir Launcelot, 'that shall bee done as I can best devise.' And so many knights went thether to behold the faire dead maide. And on the morrow shee was richly buried; and sir Launcelot offered her masse peny, and all the knights of the round table that were there at that time offered with sir Launcelot. And then when all was done, the poore man went againe with the barge. Then the queene sent for sir Launcelot, and praised him of mercy, for because she had been wroth with him causeles. 'This is not the first time,' said sir Launcelot, 'that yee have beene displeased with me causeles; but, madame, ever I must suffer you, but what sorrow that I endure yee take no force.'

So after Christmasse king Arthur let call to him many of his knights, and there they advised them together to make a party, and a great turneyment and justs. And the king of Northgalis said unto king Arthur that hee would have on his part king Anguish of Ireland, and the king with the hundred knights, and the king of Northumberland, and sir Galahalt the haut prince. So these foure kings and this mighty duke tooke a part against king Arthur and the knights of the round table; and the cry was made that the day of the justs should be beside West-

minster on Candlemasse day, wherof many knights were full glad, and made them ready to be at that justs in the freshest manner that they could. Then queene Guenever sent for sir Launcelot, and shee said to him in this manner, 'I warne you that yee ride no more in no justs nor turneyment. but that your kinsmen may know you ; for at these justs that shall bee ye shall have of me a sleeve of cloth of gold ; and I pray you, for my sake, enforce your selfe so there that men may speake of you worship. But I charge you, as yee will have my love, that yee warne your kinsmen that yee will beare that day the sleeve of cloth of gold upon your helmet.' 'Madame,' said sir Launcelot, 'your desire shall be done.' And when sir Launcelot saw his time, hee told sir Bors that he would depart, and no mo with him but sir Lavaine, unto the good hermit that dwelled in the forrest of Windsore, whose name was sir Brastias, and there he thought to rest him, and to take all the ease that hee might, because hee would bee fresh at that day of justs. And so when hee was come unto the hermitage, wit you well hee had good cheare ; and so daily sir Launcelot would go to a well fast by the hermitage, and there hee would lie downe and see the well spring and bubble, and sometime he slept there. So at that time there was a lady dwelled in that forrest, and shee was a great huntresse, and daily she used to hunt, and alway she beare her bow with her ; and no men went never with her, but alwayes women, and they were shooters, and could well kill a deere, both at the stalke¹ and at the trest ; and they daiely beare bowes and arrowes, hornes, and wood knives, and many good hounds they had, both for the string and for a bait. So it hapned that this lady the huntresse had baited her hounds for the bow at a barren hind ; and ever this lady and part of her gentlewomen costed² the hind, and checked it by the noyse of the hounds, for to have met with the hind at some water ; and so it hapned that the same hind came to the well whereas sir Launcelot was sleeping ; and so the hind when she came to the well for heate she went to the soyle³, and the hound came fast after, and umbecast⁴ about, for she had lost the perfect fewt⁵ of the hind. Right so there came the lady huntresse, which knew by her hound that the hind was at the soyle in that well. And there shee came stifly, and found the hind ; and anon shee put a broad arow in her bow, and shot at the hinde, and overshot the hinde, and by misfortune the broad arrow smote sir Launcelot. When sir Launcelot felt himselfe so hurt, hee hurled up

¹ *Stalke . . . trest.*—All these are technical terms in hunting, the exact explanation of which must be sought in the old treatises on venerie. The knowledge and correct use of such terms was formerly considered a very important part of the education of a gentleman.

² *Costed.*—Kept up with it in a parallel course, for the purpose of turning it.

³ *Soyle.*—To take soil was an old hunting term equivalent to going into the water.

⁴ *Umbecast.*—Made a circuit about.

⁵ *Fewt.*—The track.

woodly¹; and then, when he saw shee was a woman, he said thus: 'Lady or damosell, what that thou be, in an evill time beare thou a bow, the devill made thee a shooter.'

CHAP. CXXIV.—*How sir Launcelot, after that hee was hurt of a gentlewoman, came unto an hermite, and of other matters.*

'NOW mercy, faire sir,' said the lady, 'I am a gentlewoman that useth here in this forrest hunting, and our Lord knoweth I saw you not, but as heere was a barren hind at the soyle in the well, and I wend to have done well, but my hand swarved².' 'Alas!' said sir Launcelot, 'now have ye mischieved mee.' And so the lady departed. And sir Launcelot as well as hee might drew out the arrow. 'Ah mercy, Jesu,' said sir Launcelot, 'I call my selfe the most unhappiest knight that liveth, for ever when I would faintest have worship, there befalet me ever some unhappie thing. Now so Jesu me helpe, I shall bee in the field upon Candlemasse day at the justs, whatsoever fall of it.' So all that might bee gotten to heale sir Launcelot was had. So when the day was come, sir Launcelot let devise that hee was arayed and sir Lavaine and their horses, as though they had beene Sarasins; and so they departed, and came nigh to the field. Then came the king of Northgalis, the king of Northumberland, king Anguish of Ireland, sir Galahalt the haute prince, and the king with the hundred knights; and these foure kings and the haute prince brought every each of them an hundred good knights, and all these were proved knights. And then came in king Arthurs part: and there came in the king of Scotland, king Urience of Gore, king Howell of Brittain and king Chalaunce of Clarence; and each king brought with him an hundred knights; and king Arthur himselfe came into the field with two hundred knights, and the most part were knights of the table round, which were proved noble knights; and there were old knights set upon scaffolds to judge with the queene who did best.

CHAP. CXXV.—*Of a great justs done at the Christmasse, and of a great justs and turneyment ordained by king Arthur, and of sir Launcelot.*

THEN they blew unto the field, and there the king of Northgalis encountered with the king of Scotland, and there the king of Scotland had a fall; and the king of Ireland smot down king Uriens, and the king of Northumberland smot down king Howell of Brittain, and sir Galahalt the haut prince smote downe king Chalaunce of Clarence. And then king Arthur

¹ *Hurled up woodly.*—Sprang up madly.

² *Swarved.*—Swerved; made a false move.

was wood wroth¹, and ranne to the king with the hundred knights, and there king Arthur smote him downe, and after with that same speare king Arthur smote downe three other knights; and then, when his speare was broken, king Arthur did passing well. And so therewithall came sir Gawaine and sir Gaheris, sir Agravaïne and sir Mordred, and there everie-each of them smote downe a knight, and sir Gawaine smote downe foure knights. And then there began a full strong meddle², for then there came in the knights of sir Launcelots blood, and sir Gareth and sir Palomides with them, and many knights of the round table. And they began to hold the foure kings and the mightie duke so hard, that they were discomforted. But this duke sir Galahalt the haute prince was a noble knight, and by his mightie prowess of armes he held the knights of the round table straight enough. All this doing saw sir Launcelot, and then he came into the field with sir Lavaine as it had beene thunder. And then sir Bors and the knights of his blood espied sir Launcelot, and sir Bors warned sir Gareth. 'But who is he,' said they all, 'that rideth with him in the same array?' 'That is the good and gentle knight sir Lavaine,' said sir Bors. So sir Launcelot encountred with sir Gawaine, and there by force sir Launcelot smote downe sir Gawaine and his horse to the ground; and in likewise hee smote downe sir Agravaïne and sir Gaheris, and also hee smote downe sir Mordred, and all this was done with one speare; and or ever hee stunted, as fast as he might get speares, he smote downe thirtie knights, and the most part of them were knights of the round table. And ever the knights of his blood withdrew them, and made them to doe in other places where as sir Launcelot came not. And then king Arthur was wroth, when he saw sir Launcelot doe such deedes. Then the king called unto sir Gawaine, sir Mordred, sir Kay, sir Griflet, sir Lucan the butler, sir Bedivere, sir Palomides, and sir Safire his brother; and so king Arthur with these nine knights made them ready for to set upon sir Launcelot and upon sir Lavaine. All this espied sir Bors de Galis and sir Gareth of Orkeny. 'Now I dread mee sore,' said sir Bors, 'that my lord sir Launcelot will be hard matched.' 'By my head,' said sir Gareth, 'I will ride unto my lord sir Launcelot, for to helpe him, befall of mee what befall may, for hee is the same man that made me knight.' And therewith he espied a Welsh knight where he was to rest himselfe, and hee was sore hurt before by sir Gawaine, and to him sir Gareth rode, and prayed him of his knighthood for to lend him his shield for his. And when sir Gareth had his shield, it was greene with a maiden that seemed in it. Then sir Gareth came driving as fast as he might unto sir Launcelot, and said

¹ *Wood wroth*.—Mad with anger.

² *Meddle*.—A battle.

thus unto him, 'Sir knight, keepe thy selfe, for yonder cometh king Arthur with nine noble knights with him, to put you to rebuke, and so am I come to beare you fellowship for old love yee have shewed me.' 'Gramercie,' said sir Launcelot. 'Sir,' said sir Gareth, 'encounter yee with sir Gawaine, and I shall encounter with sir Palomides, and let sir Lavaine match with king Arthur; and when wee have delivered them let us three hold us sadly¹ together.' Then came king Arthur with his nine knights with him, and sir Launcelot encountred with sir Gawaine, and sir Gawaine fell to the earth. Then sir Gareth encountred with the good knight sir Palomides, and he gave him such a buffet that both his horse and hee dashed to the earth. Then encountred king Arthur with sir Lavaine, and there either of them smote other to the earth, horse and all, that they lay a great while.

Then sir Launcelot smote downe sir Agravaine, sir Gaheris, and sir Mordred. And sir Gareth smote downe sir Kay, sir Safire, and sir Griflet. And sir Lavaine was horsed againe, and hee smote downe sir Lucas the butler and sir Bedivere. And then there began a great throng of good knights. Then sir Launcelot hurled and pulled off helmes, so that at that time there might none sit him a buffet with his speare nor with his sword. And sir Gareth did such deds of armes, that all men mervailed what knight hee was with the greene shield, for hee smote downe that day and pulled downe more than thirtie knights.

So ever as sir Launcelot, sir Gareth, and sir Lavaine fought, and on the other side sir Bors, sir Ector de Maris, sir Lionell, sir Bleoberis, and sir Galahud, sir Galihodin, sir Pelleas, with moe other of king Bans blood fought on another part, and held the king with the hundred knights and also the king of Northumberland right straight and right hardy.

CHAP. CXXVI.—*How king Arthur mervailed him much of the justing and turneyment in the field, and how he rode and found sir Launcelot.*

SO this justing and this turneyment endured long, til it was almost night; for the knights of the round table releevd² ever unto king Arthur, for the king was wroth out of measure, that hee and his knights might not prevaile that day. Then sir Gawaine said unto king Arthur, 'I mervaille where all this day sir Bors de Galis and his fellowship of sir Launcelots blood be; I mervaille me all this day greatly that they bee not about you. It is for some cause.' 'By my head,' said sir Kay, 'sir Bors is yonder all this day upon the right hand of the field, and there

¹ *Sadly*.—Steadily; discreetly.

² *Relieved*.—Rallied.

hee and his blood done more worshipfuller then we doe.' 'It may well be,' said sir Gawaine, 'but I dread me alway of guile; for upon paine of my life, this knight with the red sleeve of gold is sir Launcelot himselfe, I see wel by his riding and by his great strookes giving; and the other knight in the same colour is the good young knight sir Lavaine; also, that knight with the greene shield is my brother sir Gareth, and yet hee hath disguised himselfe, for no man can make him to be against sir Launcelot, because he made him knight.' 'By my head,' said king Arthur, 'nephew, I beleewe you, therefore tell me now what is your best counsaile.' 'Sir,' said sir Gawaine, 'yee shall have my best counsaile. Let blow unto lodging, for and if hee be sir Launcelot, and my brother sir Gareth with him, with the helpe of that good young knight sir Lavaine, trust mee truly, it will be no boote to strive with them, but if we should fall ten or twelve upon one knight, and that were no worship, but shame.' 'Yee say truth,' said the king. 'And for to say sooth,' said the king, 'it were shame to us, so many as wee bee, to set upon them any more. For wit yee well,' said king Arthur, 'they be three good knights, and namely that knight with the red sleeve of gold.' So then they blew unto lodging. But foorthwithall king Arthur let send unto the foure kings and unto the mighty duke, and prayed them that the knight with the sleeve of cloth of gold depart not from them, but that the king may speake with him. Then foorthwithall king Arthur alighted and unarmed him, and gat him a little hackney¹, and rode after sir Launcelot, for ever hee had an eye upon him. And so they found him among the foure kings and the duke, and there king Arthur praied them all unto supper, and they answered with a good will. And so when they were all unarmed, king Arthur knew sir Launcelot, sir Lavaine, and sir Gareth. 'Ah! sir Launcelot,' said king Arthur, 'this day yee have heated me and my knights.' So they went unto king Arthurs lodging all together. And there was a great feast and great revell, and the prise was given unto sir Launcelot; and by herawlds they named him that hee had smitten downe fiftie knights, and sir Gareth thirtie five, and sir Lavaine twentie foure knights. And king Arthur blamed sir Gareth, because he left his fellowship and held with sir Launcelot. 'My lord,' said sir Gareth, 'hee made mee a knight, and when I saw him so hard bestead, I shamed me to see so many knights against him alone.' 'Truely,' said king Arthur unto sir Gareth, 'yee say well, and worshipfully have yee done, and to your selfe great worship; and all the dayes of my life, wit ye well I shall love you and trust you the better.'

¹ *Hackney*.—The hackney was a small and less spirited horse, on which ladies rode, and knights when they were not in their armour.

CHAP. CXXVII.—*How queene Guenever rode on maying¹ with certayne knights of the round table clothed all in greene.*

NOW it befell in the moneth of lusty May that queene Guenever called unto her knights of the round table, and shee gave them warning, that early in the morning shee should ride on maying into woods and fields beside Westminster, 'and I warne you that ye all be clothed in greene, either in silke or in cloth; and I shall bring with mee ten ladies, and every knight shall have a lady behind him, and every knight shall have a squier and too yeomen, and I will that ye all be well horsed.' So they made them ready in the freshest manner; and these were the names of the knights: sir Kay, sir Agravaïne, sir Brandiles, sir Sagramore, sir Dodinas, sir Ozanna, sir Ladinās, sir Persaunt, sir Ironside, and sir Pelleas. So on the morrow they tooke their horses, and rode on maying with the queene in great joy and delight; and the queene purposed to have beene againe with the king at the furthest by ten of the clocke, and so was her purpose at that time. Then there was a knight the which hight sir Meliagraunce, and hee was sonne unto king Bagdemagus; and this knight had at that time a castle of the gift of king Arthur, within seaven mile of Westminster. And this knight sir Meliagraunce loved passing well queene Guenever, and he had layen long in a waite for to steale away the queen; but evermore hee forbore because of sir Launcelot du Lake, for in no wise he would meddle with the queene if sir Launcelot were in her company, or else and he were neere hand her. And that time there was such a custome, that the queene rode never without a great fellowship of men of armes about her; and there were many good knights, and the most part were young men that would have worship. And never in no battaile, turneyment, or justs, they never beare none of them no manner of knowledge of their owne armes, but plaine white shields, and thereby they were called the queenes knights. And then when it hapned any of them to be of great worship by his noble deeds, then at the next high feast of Pentecost, if there were any slaine or dead, as there was no yeare that failed but some were dead, then was there chosen in their steeds that were dead the most men of worship that were called the queenes knights. But this knight sir Meliagrance had full well espied the queene and her purpose, and how sir Launcelot was not with her, and how she had no men of armes with her, but the ten knights al arrayed in green for maying. Then hee purveied him twentie men of armes and an hundred archers to destroy the queene and her knights, for he thought that time was the best season to take the queene.

¹ *Rode on maying.*—The practice of going a maying was used by all ranks until late in the seventeenth century. We frequently read of the court going a maying under the Tudors and the Stuarts.

CHAP. CXXVIII.—*How sir Meliagraunce took queen Guenever and all her knights, which were sore hurt in fighting.*

SO as the queene had mayed, and all her knights, all were bedashed¹ with hearbes and floures in the best manner and freshest. Right so came out of a wood sir Meliagraunce with eight score men well armed, as they should fight in battaile of arest, and bad the queene and her knights abide. 'Traitor knight,' said queene Guenever, 'what thinkest thou to doe? wilt thou shame thy selfe? bethinke thee how thou art a kings sonne, and knight of the round table.' 'As for all this language,' said sir Meliagraunce, 'be it as it may; for wit ye well, madame, that I have loved you many yeeres, and never or now could I get you at such a vantage as I doe now, and therefore I will take you as I find you.' Then the ten knights of the round table drew their swords, and the other let run at them with their speares; and the ten knights manly abode them, and smote away their speares, that no speare did them harme. Then they lashed together with their swords; and anon sir Kay, sir Griflet², sir Agravaïne, sir Dodinas³, and sir Ozanna were smitten to the earth with grimly wounds. Then sir Brandiles and sir Persaunt, sir Ironside, and sir Pelleas, fought long, and they were full sore wounded, for these knights or ever they were laid to the ground slew fortie men of the best of them. So when the queen saw her knights thus dolefully wounded, and needes must be slaine at the last, then for pittie and sorrow she cried and said, 'Sir Meliagraunce, sley not my knights, and I will go with thee upon this covenant, that thou save them, and suffer them to bee no more hurt; with this, that they bee led with mee where soever thou ledest mee, for I will rather sley my selfe then I will goe with thee, unlesse that these my noble knights may be in presence.' 'Madame,' said sir Meliagraunce, 'for your sake they shall bee led with you into my castle, with that ye will be ruled and ride with me.'

Then queene Guenever prayed the foure knights to leave their fight, and she and they would not depart. 'Madame,' said sir Pelleas, 'we will doe as yee doe, for as for me, I take no force of⁴ my life nor death.' For sir Pelleas gave such buffets there that no armour might hold them.

CHAP. CXXIX.—*How sir Lancelot had word how the queene was taken, and how sir Meliagraunce layed an ambushment for sir Launcelot.*

THEN by the queenes command they left battaile, and dressed the wounded knights on horsebacke, some sitting and some overthwart, that it was pittie to behold them. And then sir Meliagraunce charged the queene and all her knights that

¹ *Bedashed*.—Covered and adorned.

³ *Dodinas*.—*Ladynas*, Caxton.

² *Sir Griflet*.—*Sir Sagramor*, Caxton.

⁴ *Take no force of*.—Care not for.

none of her fellowship should depart from her, for full sore hee dread sir Launcelot du Lake, least he should have any knowledge. All this espied the queene, and prively shee called unto her a child¹ of her chamber, which was swiftly horsed, to whom shee said, 'Goe thou when thou seest thy time, and beare this ring unto sir Launcelot du Lake, and pray him as he loveth me that hee will come and see me, and that hee rescue mee if ever hee will have joy of mee; and spare thou not thy horse,' said the queene, 'neither for water nor yet for land.' And so the child espied his time, and lightly hee mounted upon his horse, and smote him with the spurs, and so departed from them as fast as ever his horse might runne. And when sir Meliagraunce saw the child so flee, hee understood well it was by the queenes commande, for to warne sir Launcelot; then they that were best horsed chased him, and shot at him, but the child went from them all. And then sir Meliagraunce said unto queene Guenever, 'Madame, yee bee about to betray mee, but I shall ordaine for sir Launcelot that hee shall not lightly come at you.' And then hee rode with her and they all to his castle in all the haste that they might; and by the way sir Meliagraunce laid in an ambushment the best archers that he might get in his countrey, to the number of thirty, for to waite upon sir Launcelot, charging them that if they saw such a manner of knight come by the way upon a white horse, in any wise to slay his horse, but in no manner of wise not to have to doe with him bodily, for hee is over hard to bee overcome. So this was done, and they were come to his castle; but in no wise the queene would never let none of the ten knights and her ladies be out of her sight, but alway they were in her presence; for that sir Meliagraunce durst make no masteries² for dread of sir Launcelot, in so much as he deemed that he had warning. So when the child was departed from the fellowshippe of sir Meliagraunce, within a while he came to Westminster, and anon he found sir Launcelot; and when hee had told his message and delivered him the queenes ring, 'Alas!' said sir Launcelot, 'now am I shamed for ever, onles that I may rescue that noble lady from dishonour.' So when sir Launcelot was all armed and upon his horse, hee prayed the child of the queenes chamber for to warne sir Lavaine how sudainely he was departed, and for what cause.

CHAP. CXXX.—*How sir Launcelots horse was slaine, and how sir Launcelot rode in a chariot for to rescue the queene.*

THEN sir Launcelot rode as fast as he might, and he tooke the water at Westminster bridge³, and made his horse for to swim over the Thames to Lambeth; and then within a while

¹ Child.—A page.

² No masteries.—Use no compulsion.

³ Westminster bridge.—It is not easy to understand how this strange anachronism

he came unto a wood ; and there was a straight way, and therein the thirtie archers bad sir Launcelot to turne againe and follow no longer the trace. 'What command have yee thereto,' said sir Launcelot, 'to cause me that am a knight of the round table to leave my right way?' So then they shot sir Launcelots horse, and smote him with many arrowes ; and then sir Launcelot avoided his horse, and went on foote, but there were so many ditches and hedges betweene them and him that he might not meddle with one of them. Then sir Launcelot went a while on foote, and then was he foule combred with his armour, shield, and speare, and all that belonged to him ; and then by fortune there came by a chariot¹, the which came thither for to fetch wood. 'Tell mee, carter,' said sir Launcelot, 'what I shall give thee for to suffer me to leape into the chariot, and that thou bring mee unto a castle within these two miles.' 'Thou shalt not come within my chariot,' said the carter, 'for I am sent for to fetch wood for my lord sir Meliagraunce.' Then sir Launcelot lept to him, and gave him such a buffet, that hee fell to the ground stark dead. Then the other carter, his fellow, was afeard, and said, 'Faire lord, save my life, and I shall bring you where you will.' 'Then I charge thee,' said sir Launcelot, 'that thou drive mee and this chariot even unto sir Meliagraunce castle.' So the carter drove forth as fast as hee could ; and sir Launcelots horse followed the chariot with more then fortie arrowes broad and rough in him. And more then an houre and a halfe queene Guenever was in a bay window waiting with her ladies, and espied an armed knight standing in a chariot. 'See, madame,' said a lady, 'where as rideth in a chariot a goodly armed knight, I suppose that he rideth to hanging.' 'Where?' said the queene. And then the queene espied by his shield that hee was there himselfe sir Launcelot du Lake ; and then she was ware where came his horse after that chariot. By this was sir Launcelot come unto the gate of the castle, and he descended downe, and cried, that all the castle rang of it, 'Where art thou, false traitour, sir Meliagraunce, and knight of the round table? now com forth here, thou false traitour knight, thou and thy fellowship with thee ; for here I am sir Launcelot du Lake, I shal fight with thee.' And therewithall he beare the gate wide open upon the porter, and smot him under his eare with his gauntlet, that his necke brake in sunder.

can have arisen, for there was no bridge at Westminster until the middle of the eighteenth century. Caxton's text has *at Westmynstyre brydge*.

¹ *Chariot*.—A cart. The cart was used for conveying criminals to the gallows, and it was hence considered disgraceful for a gentleman to be seen in it. This explains why, when Launcelot approached the castle, one of the ladies supposed he was riding 'to hanging.' It may be remarked that this incident in the history of Launcelot was made the subject of a separate poem by Chrestiens de Troyes, a trouvère of the thirteenth century, under the title of the *Roman de la Charette*.

CHAP. CXXXI.—*How sir Meliagraunce required forgivenessse of queene Guenever, and how she appeased sir Lancelot, and of other matters.*

SO when sir Meliagraunce heard that sir Launcelot was come, hee ran to the queene and fell upon his knees, and said, 'Mercy, madame, now I put mee wholly in your grace.' Then the queene and her ladies went downe unto the knight sir Launcelot, which stood wrath out of measure in the inner court for to abide battaile; and ever hee said, 'Thou traitour knight, come forth here.' Then the queene came unto him, and said, 'Sir Launcelot, why be ye so moved?' 'Ha, madame,' said sir Launcelot, 'yee ought to be more displeased then I am, for yee have the hurt and the dishonour; for wit yee well, madame, my hurt is but litle for the killing of a maires sonne, but the despite greveth mee much more then all my hurt.' 'Truly,' said queene Guenever, 'yee say truth; but heartely I thanke you,' said the queene, 'but yee must come in with mee peaceably, for al things is put in my hands, and all that is evill shall be for the best; for the knight full sore repenteth him for the misadventure that is befallen him.' 'Madame,' said sir Launcelot, 'if I had wist that ye would have been so soone accorded with him, I would not have made such haste to you.' 'Why say you so?' said the queene; 'do ye forethinke¹ your selfe of your good deedes? Wit yee well, I accorded never unto him for favour nor love that I have unto him, but for to lay downe every shamefull noyse.' 'Madame,' said sir Launcelot, 'yee understand full well that I was never willing nor glad of shamefull slaunder nor noise, and there is neither king, queene, nor knight that beareth life, except my lord king Arthur and you, madame, that should let mee, but that I should make sir Meliagraunce heart full cold or I depart from hence.' 'That wot I well,' said the queene; 'but what will ye more? yee shall have all things ruled as ye like to have it.' 'Madame,' said sir Launcelot, 'so that ye be pleased I care not, as for my part ye shall ful soone please.' And then sir Launcelot asked where the ten knights were that were sore wounded. So she shewed them unto sir Launcelot; and there they made great joy of his comming, and sir Launcelot made great dole for their hurts, and bewailed them greatly; and there sir Launcelot told them how cowardly and traiterously sir Meliagraunce had set archers to sley his horse, and how he was faine to put himselfe in a chariot.

So sir Launcelot had great cheere with the queene; and then sir Launcelot made a promise with the queene, that the same night hee should come into a window outward to a garden, and that window was bared with iron; and there sir Launcelot promised for to meete her when all folkes were asleepe.

¹ *Forthinkhe*.—Repent.

CHAP. CXXXII.—*How sir Launcelot came in the night to the queene, and how sir Meliagraunce appeached the queene of treason.*

THEN the knights that were wounded were searched, and soft salves were laid to their wounds, and so it passed on till supper time; and all the cheere that might bee made them, theré it was shewed unto the queene and her knights. Then, when season was, they went to their chambers; but in no wise the queene would not suffer the wounded knights to bee from her, but that they were laide within draughts upon beds and pillowes, that shee her selfe might see to them, that they lacked nothing. So when sir Launcelot was in his chamber that was assigned unto him, hee called unto him sir Lavaine, and told him that that night hee must goe speake with his lady dame Guenever. 'Sir,' said sir Lavaine, 'let me go with you and it please you, for I dread me sore of the treason of sir Meliagraunce.' 'Nay,' said sir Launcelot, 'I thanke you, I will have no person with me at this time.' And then sir Launcelot tooke his sword in his hand, and prively went unto a place where as he had espied a ladder before hand, and that hee tooke under his arme, and beare it through the garden, and set it up in a window; and there anon the queene was ready to meet him. And then they made either to other their complaints of divers things; and then sir Launcelot wished that he might come in unto her. And then hee set his hand upon the barres of iron, and pulled at them with such a greaf¹ might that hee brake them cleane out of the stone wals; and therewithall one of the barres of iron cut the brawne¹ of sir Launcelots hand throughout to the bone. And then he lept into the chamber to the queene. 'Make yee no noyse,' said the queene, 'for my wounded knights lie here fast by me.' And so to passe forth upon this tale, sir Launcelot remained with the queene untill it was in the dawning of the day. And when hee saw the time that hee might tary no longer, hee tooke his leave, and departed at the window, and put it together againe as well as he might, and so departed, and came to his owne chamber; and there he told sir Lavaine how hee was hurt. Then sir Lavaine dressed his hand, and staunched it, and put upon it a glove, that it should not bee espied. And so the queene lay long in her bed, untill it was nine of the clocke. Then sir Meliagraunce went to the queenes chamber, and found her ladies there ready clothed. 'Jesu, mercy,' said sir Meliagraunce, 'what ayleth you, madame, that yee sleepe thus long?' And so foorth withall he saw the cloth on a table by the window was all bebled with the blood of sir Launcelots hurt hand. And when sir Meliagraunce espied that blood, then

¹ *Brawne.*—The fleshy part.

hee deemed in himselfe that some of the wounded knights had been in the queene's chamber that night. 'Ah, madame,' said sir Meliagraunce, 'now I prove it well that it was not for nought that yee laide these wounded knights within the bounds of your chamber; therefore I will accuse you of treason before my liege lord king Arthur. And now I have proved you, madame, with a shameful deed, for a wounded knight this night hath been in your chamber.' 'That is false,' said the queene, 'and that I report me to them all.' Then when the ten knights heard sir Meliagraunce words, they spak al with one voice, and said to sir Meliagraunce, 'Thou saist falsely, and wrongfully putttest upon us such a deede, and that wee will make good any of us; choose which thou list of us, when we are whole of our wounds.' So in this rumour came in sir Launcelot, and found them all at a great aray.

CHAP. CXXXIII.—*How sir Launcelot answered for the queene, and waged battaile against sir Meliagraunce; and how sir Launcelot was taken in a trap.*

'**A**HA! what aray is this?' said sir Launcelot. Then sir Meliagraunce told him what hee had found. 'Beware what ye do,' said sir Launcelot, 'for and ye say so and that ye will prove it, it shall be taken at your hands.' 'Now hold,' said sir Meliagraunce, 'here is my glove, that shee is a traitresse unto my lord king Arthur.' 'And I receive your glove,' said sir Launcelot. And so they were sealed with their signets, and delivered to the ten knights. 'Upon what day shall we do battaile together?' said sir Launcelot. 'This day eight daies,' said sir Meliagraunce, 'in the field beside Westminster.' 'I am agreed,' said sir Launcelot. 'Then let us go to dinner,' said sir Meliagraunce; 'and after dinner yee and the queene and ye all may ride unto Westminster.' 'I wil wel,' said sir Launcelot. And then sir Meliagraunce said unto sir Launcelot, 'Pleaseth it you to se the fetures¹ of this castle?' 'With a good will,' said sir Launcelot. And then they went together from chamber to chamber, for sir Launcelot dread no perils. And as he went with sir Meliagraunce, he troade on a trap, and the board rolled, and therewith sir Launcelot fell downe more then ten fadome into a cave upon straw. And then sir Meliagraunce departed, and made semblaunt as though he had not wist where he was. And when sir Launcelot was thus missed, they mervailed where he was become. And then queen Guenever and many of them deemed that he was

¹ *Fetures*.—*Eftures*, Caxton; a mere misprint. It should be *estures*, or *astres*, i.e. the inward part of a building. The printer of the edition of 1634 did not understand it, and turned it to *fetures* (features).

departed as he was wont to do sodeinly; for sir Meliagraunce made sodainly to put out of the way sir Lavaines horse, that they might all understand that sir Launcelot was departed sodainly. So it past forth untill after dinner; and then sir Lavaine would not stint untill that he had ordained horse litters for the wounded knights that they might be laide in them; and so with the queene and them all, both ladies and gentlewomen and many other, went to Westminster. And the knights told unto king Arthur how sir Meliagraunce had appealed the queen of high treason, and how sir Launcelot had received the glove of him, 'and this day eight dayes they shall doe battaile together afore you.' 'By my head,' said king Arthur, 'I am afraid that sir Meliagraunce hath taken upon him a great charge. But where is sir Launcelot!' said the king. 'Sir,' said they all, 'we wit not where he is, but we deeme hee is ridden to some adventures, as hee is oftentimes wont to doe, for hee hath sir Lavaines horse.' 'Let him be,' said the king, 'hee will bee found, but if hee be trapped with some treason.'

CHAP. CXXXIV.—*How sir Launcelot was delivered out of prison by a lady, and how he tooke a white courser, and came for to keepe his day.*

NOW returne wee unto sir Launcelot lying within that cave in full great paine; and every day there came a lady and brought him his meat and his drinke. So she came unto sir Launcelot that same day that the battaile should bee, and said to him, 'Sir Launcelot, me thinketh yee are too strong hearted, but wouldest thou kisse me once, I would deliver thee and thine armour and the best horse that is within sir Meliagraunce stable.' 'As for to kisse you,' said sir Launcelot, 'I may do that and leese no worship, and wit you well, and I understand there were any disworship for to kisse you, I would not doe it.' Then hee kissed her, and then she gate him and brought him to his armour. And when hee was armed, she brought him to a stable, where as stood twelve good coursers, and bad him choose the best.

CHAP. CXXXV.—*How sir Launcelot came the same time that sir Meliagraunce abode him in the field, and dressed him to battaile.*

NOW leave we sir Launcelot galloping all that he might, and speake we of queene Guenever that was brought to a fier to have been burnt: for sir Meliagraunce was sure, him thought, that sir Launcelot should not be at that battaile; and therefore he ever cried upon king Arthur for to do him justice, or else for to bring forth sir Launcelot. Then was

the king and al the court full sore abashed and shamed that the queene shou'd bee burnt in the default of sir Lancelot. 'My good lord king Arthur,' said sir Lavaine, 'ye may right well understand that it is not wel with my lord sir Lancelot, for and he were alive, so that he be not sick or in prison, wit ye wel that he would be here, and therefore now, my lord king Arthur, I beseech you give me licence to doe battaile here this day for my lord and master, and for to save my lady the queene.' 'Now I give you leave,' said king Arthur, 'and doe your best, for I dare well say there is some treason done to sir Launcelot.' Then was sir Lavaine armed and horsed, and suddenly at the lists end hee rode to performe this battaile. And right as the heralds should crie '*Lesses les aller*', right so came in sir Launcelot driving with all the force of his horse. And so king Arthur cried, 'Ho! and abide.' Then was sir Launcelot called before king Arthur on horsebacke, and there hee told openly, before the king and all them that were present, how sir Meliagraunce had served him first and last. And when the king and the queene and all the lordes knew of the treason of sir Meliagraunce, they were all ashamed on his behalfe. And then was queene Guenever sent for, and set by the king in great trust of her champion. And so then there was no more to say, but sir Launcelot and sir Meliagraunce dressed them unto battaile, and tooke their speares, and so they came together as thunder; and at the last sir Launcelot smote him such a buffet upon the helme that hee fell to the ground; and then he cried upon him aloude, 'Most noble knight sir Launcelot du Lake, I pray you save my life; for I yeeld me as an over-come knight, and whether I shall live or die I put me in the kings hands and yours.' Then sir Launcelot wist not what to doe, for hee had rather then all the good of the world hee might have beene revenged upon sir Meliagraunce. And then sir Launcelot looked toward queene Guenever, if hee might espie by any signe or countenance what hee should have done. And then the queene waged her head upon sir Launcelot, as though shee should say, 'Sley him.' Then sir Launcelot bad him arise for shame and performe that battaile to the uttermost. 'I shall proffer you large proffers,' said sir Launcelot; 'that is to say, I shall unarme my head and the left quarter of my body all that may bee unarmed, and I shall let bind my left hand behind me, so that it shall not helpe mee, and right so I shall doe battaile with you.' When sir Meliagraunce heard that, hee start upon his legges, and said on high, 'My lord king Arthur, take heede to this proffer, for I will take it, and let him bee disarmed and bound according unto his proffer.' Then sir Meliagraunce came with his sword

¹ *Lesses les aller.*—*Laissez les aller*, let them go.

all on high, and sir Launcelot shewed him openly his bare head and the bare left side; and when he wend to have smitten him upon the head, then lightly he avoided the left leg and the left side, and put his right hand and his sword to that strooke, and so put it aside with great sleight. Then with great force sir Lancelot smot him upon the helmet such a buffet, that the strooke karved the head in two parts. And then the king and the queene made much of sir Launcelot, and more he was cherished then ever he was before.

CHAP. CXXXVI.—*How sir Urre came unto king Arthurs court for to bee healed of his wounds, and how king Arthur would begin to handle him.*

THEN ther was a good knight in the land of Hungary, whose name was sir Urre, and he was an adventurous knight; and in all places where hee might heare of any deedes of worship, there would hee be. So it hapned in Spaine there was an earles sonne, the which hight Alphegus, and at a great turnement in Spaine, this sir Urre and sir Alphegus encountred together for very envy, and by fortune sir Urre slew sir Alphegus the earles sonne of Spaine. But this knight that was slaine had given sir Urre, or ever hee was slaine, seven great wounds, three on the head, and foure on the body and upon his left hand. And this sir Alphegus had a mother which was a great sorceresse, and shee, for the despite of her sonnes death, wrought by her subtile crafts that sir Urre should never be whole til that the best knight of the world had serched his wounds. Then sir Urres mother let make an horse-litter, and put him therein under two palfries; and then shee tooke sir Urres sister with him, which was a full faire damosell, whose name was Feloly, and then shee tooke a page with her to keepe their horses. And so they led sir Urre, seven yeares through all lands Christian, and never shee could find no knight that might ease her sonne. So at the last she came into the bounds of England, and at the feast of Pentecost at king Arthurs court that at that time was holden at Caerleill. Then king Arthur let call the lady, and asked her the cause why shee had brought that hurt knight into that countrey. And then shee told the king where hee was wounded and of whom, and how that, by enchantment, hee should never bee whole unto the time that the best knight of the world had searched his wounds. 'What is his name?' said king Arthur. 'My good and gracious lord,' said shee, 'his name is sir Urre of the mount.' 'In good time,' said king Arthur; 'and sith yee are come hither into this countrey, ye are welcome. And wit well that here shall your sonne be healed, and if any christian man may heale him; and for to give all other men

of worship courage, I myselfe will assay to handle your sonne and search him unto my power, not presuming upon me that I am so worthy to heale your brother by my deeds, but I will encourage other men of worship to doe as I will doe.' And then the king commanded all the kings, dukes, and earles, and al the noble knights of the round table that were there that time present, to come into the medow of Caerleil. And so at that time there were but an hundred and ten knights of the round table, for forty knights were away.

CHAP. CXXXVII.—*How king Arthur handled sir Urre, and after him many other knights of the round table.*

THEN king Arthur looked upon sir Urre, and thought in himselfe that hee had beene a full likly man when hee was whole. And then king Arthur made him to be taken out of the litter, and laid him upon the ground, and there was laid a cushin of cloth of gold that he should kneele upon. So then king Arthur softly handled him, and then some of his wounds renewed on bleeding. Then after king Arthur, king Claraunce of Northumberland searched, and it would not be; and then sir Barraunt le Apres, that was called the king with the hundred knights, he assaied and failed; and so did king Uriens of the land of Gore; so did king Anguish of Ireland; so did king Nentres of Garloth; so did king Carados of Scotland; so did the duke Galahalt the haut prince; so did Constantine, that was king Carados sonne of Cornewaile; so did duke Chalaunce of Claraunce; so did the earle Ulbause; so did the earle Lambaile; so did the earle Aristause. Then came in sir Gawaine with his three sonnes, sir Gingaine¹, sir Florence, and sir Lovell; and sir Gawaine and his sonnes failed. Then came in sir Agravaine, sir Gaheris, sir Mordred, and the good knight sir Gareth, which was of very knighthood worth all the brethren; so there came knights of sir Launcelots kinne, but sir Launcelot was not that time in the court, for hee was that time on his adventures. Then sir Lionell, sir Ector de Maris, sir Bors de Ganis, sir Blamor de Ganis, sir Bleoberis de Ganis, sir Galhalantin, sir Galihodin, sir Manadiuke, sir Villiards le Valiaunt, sir Hebes le Renowme, all these knights were of sir Launcelots kinne, and they failed everyeach one. Then came in sir Sagamore le Desirous, sir Dodinas le Savage, sir Dinadan, sir Brunor le Noire, which sir Kay called La-cote-male-taile, and sir Kay the seneshall, sir Kay de Straungis, sir Meliot de Logris, and sir Petipace of Winchelsee, sir Galleron of Galway, sir Melion of the mountaige, sir Sadocke, sir Uwayne les Avoutres, and sir Ozanna le Cuer hardy. Then there came in sir Astamore, and

¹ *Gingaine.*—*Sir Gyngalyn*, Caxton.

sir Gromore, sir Grummors sonne, sir Crosselme, sir Sersause le Breuse, and all the knights of the round table, for to search sir Urre. To that entent the king did it, for to know which was the noblest knight among them all. Then there came in king Pellinores sons, sir Agravaile¹, sir Durnar, and sir Tor. Then came in sir Griflet le fise de Dieu, sir Lucan the butler, sir Bedivere his brother, sir Brandiles, sir Constantine, sir Cadors sonne of Cornewaile, which was king after Arthurs dayes, and sir Clegis, sir Sadocke, sir Dinas the seneshall of Cornewaile, sir Fergus, sir Driaunt, sir Lambegus, sir Clarus of Cleremount, sir Clodrus, sir Hectimere, sir Edward of Carnarvan, sir Dinas, sir Priamus, which was christened by the noble knight sir Tristram, and these three were brethren, sir Helaine le Blanke, which was sonne unto sir Bors, and sir Brian de Listinoise. Sir Gautere, sir Reinold, sir Gillemere, were three bretheren that sir Launcelot wan upon a bridge in sir Kays armour; sir Guiart le Petie, sir Bellangere le Breuse, which was sonne unto the good sir Alisaunder Lorphelin, that was slaine by the treason of king Marke. Then came sir Hebes, sir Morganore, sir Sentraile, sir Suppinabiles, sir Bellangere le Orgulous, which the good knight sir Launcelot wan in plaine bataille; sir Neroveus and sir Plenorius, two good knights that sir Launcelot wan; sir Darras, sir Harry le fise Lake, sir Hermenid, brother to king Hermance, for whom sir Palomides fought at the red citie with two bretheren; and sir Selises of the dolorous toure, sir Edward of Orkeney, and sir Ironside, which was called the noble knight of the red lands, that sir Gareth wan for the love of dame Liones; sir Arrocke le Graunt², sir Degraigne saunce Vilany, that fought with the giaunt of the blacke low; sir Epinogris, that was the kings sonne of Northumberland; sir Pelleas, which loved the lady Ettard, and hee had died for her love had not beene one of the ladies of the lake, her name was dame Nimue, and shee wedded sir Pelleas, and she saved him that he was never slaine, and he was a full noble knight; sir Lamiel of Cardife, that was a great lover; sir Plaine de Force, sir Meleaus de Lile, sir Robert³ le Cuer hardy, which was king Arthurs sonne; sir Mador de la Port, sir Colgrevaunce, sir Hervise de la Forrest savage; sir Marrocke, the good knight that was betrayed by his wife, for shee made him well a seven yeares a warwolf⁴; sir Persaunt, and sir Pertelope his brother, which was called the greene knight, and sir Perimones, brother unto them both, which was called the red knight, which sir

¹ *Agravaile*.—*Aglouale*, Caxton.

² *Sir Arrocks le Graunt*.—*Sir Arroch de Grevaunt*, Caxton.

³ *Sir Robert*.—*Sir Bobart*, Caxton.

⁴ *Warwolf*.—A man changed into a wolf by means of sorcery; a well known mediæval superstition. The printer of the edition of 1634, not understanding the word, changed it into the unmeaning phrase *war most*, which I have corrected from Caxton.

Gareth of Orkeney wan when he was called Beaumains. Al these hundred knights and ten searched sir Urres wounds by the commandement of king Arthur.

CHAP. CXXXVIII.—*How sir Launcelot was commanded by king Arthur to handle his wounds, and anon he was whole, and how they thanked God.*

'MERCY, Jesu,' said king Arthur, 'where is sir Launcelot du Lake, that he is not here at this time?' Thus as they stood and spake of many things, there was espied sir Launcelot, which came riding toward them, and anon it was told the king thereof. 'Peace!' said the king; 'let no manner of thing bee said untill that hee bee come to us.' So when sir Launcelot espied king Arthur, he descended downe from his horse, and came unto the king, and saluted him and them all. Then said king Arthur unto sir Launcelot, 'Yee must doe as we have done;' and told sir Launcelot what they had done, and shewed him all those that had searched sir Urre. 'Jesu defend me!' said sir Launcelot, 'when so many kings and knights have assailed and failed, that I should presume upon mee for to achieve that all yee, my lords, might not achieve.' 'Yee take it wrong,' said king Arthur, 'yee shall not doe it for no presumption, but for to beare us fellowship in as much as yee bee a fellow of the round table. And if yee prevaile not to heale him, I dare say there is no knight in this countrey may heale him, and therefore I pray you doe as wee have done.' And then all the kings and knights for the most part prayd sir Launcelot to search him. And then the wounded knight sir Urre set himselfe up full weakly, and prayed sir Launcelot heartely. Then sir Launcelot kneeled downe by the wounded knight, saying to him thus, 'My lord king Arthur, I must needs doe your commandement, which is full sore against my heart.' And then he held up his hand, and looked into the east, saying secretly to himselfe, 'Thou blessed Father, Sonne, and Holy-ghost, I beseech thee of thy mercy, that my simple worship and honesty be saved, and thou, blessed Trinitie, thou maist give power to heale this sicke knight by the great vertue and grace of thee, but, good Lord, never of my selfe.' And then devoutly kneeling hee ransaked the wounds, that they bled a little; and forthwith they faire healed, and seemed as though they had beene whole seven yeares before. Then king Arthur and all the other kings and knights kneeled downe, and gave thanks and praise unto God and to his blessed mother, and ever sir Lancelot wept as he had beene a child that had beene beaten. Then king Arthur asked sir Urre how he felt himselfe. 'My good lord,' said hee, 'I felt my selfe never so lusty.' 'Will yee

justs and doe deedes of armes?' said king Arthur. 'Sir,' said sir Urre, 'and I had all that belonged to justs, I would soone be ready.'

CHAP. CXXXIX.—*How there was made a party of an hundred knights against an hundred knights, and of other matters.*

THEN king Arthur made a party of an hundred knights to bee against an hundred knights; and so on the morrow after they justed for a diamond. But there justed not one of the dangerous knights. And then by the assent of all the kings and lords, both sir Urre and sir Lavaine were made knights of the round table; and sir Lavaine cast his love to dame Felilolie, sir Urres sister. And then they were wedded together with great joy, and king Arthur gave unto everyeach of them a barony of lands. And this knight sir Urre would never goe from sir Launcelot, but hee and sir Lavaine waited evermore upon him. Thus they lived in the court with great noblenesse and joy long time; but ever night and day sir Agravaine, sir Gawaines brother, awaited¹ queene Guenever and sir Launcelot, for to put them to a rebuke and shame.

CHAP. CXL.—*How sir Agravaine and sir Mordred were busie upon sir Gawaine for to disclose the love betweene sir Launcelot and queene Guenever.*

AT that season of the merry moneth of May, when every heart flourisheth and burgeneth², it hapned there befell a great anger, the which stinted not till the floure of chivalrie of all the world was destroyed and slaine. And all was long of two unhappie knights the which were named sir Agravaine and sir Mordred; for these too knights had ever a privie hate unto the queene dame Guenever and unto sir Launcelot, and dayly and nightly they ever watched upon sir Launcelot. So it mishapned sir Gawaine and his brethren were in king Arthurs chamber; and then sir Agravaine said thus openly, and not in counsaile, that many knights might heare it, 'I mervaile that we all be not ashamed, both to see and know how sir Lancelot beareth himselfe with the queene, and it is shamefully suffred of us all that so noble a king as king Arthur should bee so shamed.' Then speake sir Gawaine, and said, 'Brother sir Agravaine, I pray you and charge you moove no such matter no more before me; for I will not be of your counsaile.' 'So God mee helpe,' said sir Gaheris and sir Gareth, 'wee will not bee knowne,

¹ *Awaited.*—Watched.

² *Burgeneth.*—Buddeth.

brother sir Agravaine, of your deeds.' 'Then will I,' said sir Mordred. 'I beleeve that well,' sayed sir Gawaine, 'for ever unto all unhappinesse, brother sir Mordred, thereto will yee graunt, and I would that yee left all this and made you not so busie, for I know well enough what will befall of it.' 'Fall of it what fall may,' said sir Agravaine, 'I will disclose it¹ unto the king.' 'Yee shall not doe it by my counsaile,' said sir Gawaine, 'for if there rise any war and wrath betweene sir Launcelot and us, wit you well, brother, there will many kings and great lords hold with sir Launcelot. Also, brother sir Agravaine, ye must remember how oftentimes sir Lancelot hath rescewed the king and the queene, and the best of us all had beene full cold at the heart roote had not sir Lancelot beene a better knight than we; and that hath he proved himself so oft. And as for my part, I will never bee against sir Lancelot for one daies deede, as when he rescewed me from king Carados of the dolorous toure, and slew him and saved my life. Also, brother sir Agravaine, and sir Mordred, in likewise sir Lancelot rescewed you both, and three score and two, from sir Torquine. Me thinketh, brother, such kind deeds and kindnesse should be remembered.' 'Do as ye list,' said sir Agravaine, 'for I will hide it no longer.' With these words come to them king Arthur. 'Now, brother, stint your noise,' said sir Gawaine. 'We will not,' said sir Agravaine and sir Mordred. 'Will ye so?' said sir Gawaine; 'then God speede you, for I wil not hear your tales, nor be of your counsaile.' 'No more will I,' said sir Gareth and sir Gaheris, 'for we wil never say evil by that man; for because,' said sir Gareth, 'sir Lancelot made me knight, by no maner ought I to say evill of him.' And therewith they three departed, making great dole. 'Alas!' said sir Gawaine and sir Gareth, 'now is the realme hole mischived, and the noble felowship of the round table shal be dispersed.' So they departed.

CHAP. CXLI.—*How sir Agravaine disclosed their love unto king Arthur, and how that king Arthur gave them licence for to take him.*

AND then king Arthur asked them what noise they made. 'My lord,' said sir Agravaine, 'I shall tell you that which I may keepe no longer. I and my brother sir Mordred brake unto my brothers sir Gawaine, sir Gaheris, and sir Gareth, how this we know all, that sir Launcelot courteth your queene, and hath done long, and wee be your sisters sonnes, and wee may suffer it no longer. And we know all that ye should be above sir Launcelot, and yee are the king that made him knight; and therefore wee will prove it that he is a traitour to your person.' 'If it be so,' said king Arthur, 'wit yee well hee is none other;

¹ *It*.—i. e. the intrigue between sir Launcelot and the queen Guenever.

but I would bee loth to begin such a thing but if I might have prooves upon it. Therefore, and it bee sooth as yee say, I would hee were taken with the deed.' For king Arthur was loth thereto that any noise should bee upon sir Launcelot and his queene; for sir Launcelot had done so much for him and for his queene so many times, that wit ye well king Arthur loved him passingly well. 'My lord,' said sir Agravaine, 'ye shal ride to morrow on hunting, and doubt yee not sir Launcelot will not goe with you; then yee may send the queene word that ye will lie out all that night; and so may yee send for your cookes: and then upon paine of death we shall take him that night in his treason, and either wee shall bring him to you dead or quicke.' 'I will well,' said the king. 'Sir,' said sir Agravaine, 'my brother sir Mordred and I will take with us twelve knights of the round table.' So upon the morrow king Arthur rode on hunting, and sent word unto the queene that he would lie out all that night. Then sir Agravaine and sir Mordred gate unto them twelve knights, and hid them selves in a chamber of the castle of Caerlell, and these were their names: sir Colgrevaunce, sir Mador de la Port, sir Gingaline, sir Meliot de Logris, sir Petipace of Winchelsee, sir Galleron of Galway, sir Melion of the mountaine, sir Astamore, sir Gromore Somor-jour, sir Curselaine, sir Florence, sir Lovell. So these twelve knights were with sir Mordred and sir Agravaine; and all they were of Scotland, either of sir Gawaines kinne, either well willers of his brethren. So when the night came, sir Launcelot told sir Bors how hee would goe that night and speake with queene Guenever. 'Sir,' said sir Bors, 'I alway dread me much of sir Agravaine, and never gave my heart against your going that ever yee went to the queene as much as now; for I mistrust that the king is out this night from the queene, because peradventure hee hath layen some watch for you and the queen, and therefore I dread me sore of treason.' 'Faire nephew,' said sir Launcelot, 'I mervaile me much why yee say thus, sithence the queene hath sent for me; and wit yee well that I will not bee so much a coward but that shee shall understand I will see her good grace.' 'God speed you well,' said sir Bors, 'and send you safe and sound againe.'

CHAP. CXLII.—*How sir Launcelot was espied in the queenes chamber, and how sir Agravaine and sir Mordred came with twelve knights to sley him.*

SO sir Launcelot departed, and tooke his sword underneath his arme. And so that noble knight went forth in his mantell, and put himselfe in great jeopardy; and so hee passed till hee came unto the queenes chamber; and the queene and sir Launcelot were together. But thus as they were together,

there came sir Agravaïne and sir Mordred, with twelve knights with them of the round table, and with a crying voice they said thus: 'Traitor knight sir Launcelot du Lake, now art thou taken!' And thus they cried with a loud voice, that all the court might heere it; and they al were fourteen armed at all points, as they should fight in a battaile. 'Madame,' said sir Lancelot, 'is here any armour within your chamber that I might cover my body withall? and if there be any, I pray you heartely let me have it, and I shall soone stint their malice by the grace of God.' 'Truely,' said the queene, 'I have none armour, shield, sword, nor speare, wherefore I dread mee sore yee are like to bee slaine, and then shall I bee brent; for and yee might escape them,' said the queene, 'I would not doubt but that yee would rescue me in what danger so ever I stand in.' But alwayes sir Agravaïne and sir Mordred cried, 'Traitor knight, come out of the queenes chamber, for wit thou well that thou art so beset that thou shalt not escape!' 'O Jesu, mercy,' said sir Launcelot, 'this shamefull crie and noise we may not suffer, for better were death at once, then thus to endure this paine.' Then hee tooke the queene in his armes and kissed her, and said, 'Most noble christian queene, I beseech you, as ye have ever beene my speciall good lady, and I at all times your true and poore knight to my power, and as I never failed you in right nor yet in wrong sithence the first day that king Arthur made me knight, that yee will pray for my soule if that I heere be slaine; for well I am assured that sir Bors my nephew, and all the remnant of my kinne, with sir Lavaine and sir Urre, that they will not faile you for to rescue you from the fire, and therefore, mine owne deare lady, recomfort your selfe, whatsoever come of me, that ye goe with sir Bors my nephew and sir Urre; and they all will doe you all the pleasure they can or may, that ye shall live like a queene upon my lands.' 'Truly,' said queene Guenever, 'I would, and it might please God, that they would take me and sleie me, and suffer you to escape.' 'That shal never be,' said sir Lancelot; 'God defend me from such a shame, but, Lord Jesu, be thou my shield and mine armour.'

CHAP. CXLIII.—*How sir Launcelot slew sir Colgrevaunce, and armed him in his armour, and after slew sir Agravaïne and twelve of his felowes.*

AND therewithall sir Launcelot wrapped his mantell round about his arme well and surely. And by then they had gotten a great forme out of the hall, and therewithall they dashed at the chamber doore. Then sir Launcelot unbarred the dore, and with his lift hand hee held it open a little, so that but one man might come in at once. And so anon there came

in striding a good knight, a big man and a large, which was called sir Colgrevaunce of Gore, and hee with a sword strake at sir Launcelot mightely, and he put aside the strooke, and gave him such a buffet upon the helme that hee fell downe dead, groveling within the chamber doore. And then sir Launcelot with his great might drew that dead knight within the chamber doore; and then sir Lancelot, with the helpe of the queene and her ladies, was lightly armed in sir Colgrevaunce armour. So then sir Launcelot set the chamber doore wide open, and mightely and knightly hee strood in among them, and anon at the first buffet hee slew sir Agravaune and twelve of his fellowes, within a little while after he had laid them to the cold earth; and there was none of all the twelve that might stand with sir Launcelot a buffet; also sir Lancelot wounded sir Mordred, and he fled with all his might. And then sir Launcelot returned againe unto the queene, and said, 'Madame, wit yee wel that now will king Arthur ever bee my foe, and therefore, madame, and if it like you that I may have you with me, and I shall save you from all manner of ill adventures and daungers.' 'That is not best,' said the queene; 'me seemeth now yee have done so much harme, it will be best yee hold you still with this; and if ye see that as to morrow they will put me unto the death, then may ye rescew me as ye thinke best.' 'I will well,' said sir Launcelot, 'for have ye no doubt, while I am living, I shall rescew you.' And then hee kissed her, and either gave other a ring; and so there hee left the queene, and went to his lodging.

CHAP. CXLIV.—*How sir Launcelot came to sir Bors, and told him how hee had sped, and in what adventure he had beene, and how he escaped.*

SO when sir Bors saw sir Launcelot, hee was never so glad of his home comming as he was at that time. 'Jesu, mercy,' said sir Launcelot, 'what may this meane?' 'Sir,' said sir Bors, 'after that ye were departed from us, we all that be of your blood and your well willers were so dreaming, that some in their dreames caught naked swords in their hands; therefore, we deeme there is some great strife at hand; and then we all deemed that yee were betrayed with some treason, and therefore wee made us thus ready, what neede soever ye had beene in.' 'My faire nephew,' said sir Launcelot unto sir Bors, 'now shall ye wit all that this night I was more harder besteed then ever I was in my life, and yet I escaped.' And so hee told them all, how and in what manner, as yee have heard before. 'Sir,' said sir Bors, 'all is welcome that God sendeth us, and wee all have had much wealth¹ with you and much worship, and there

¹ *Wealth.*—weal; good.

is no band of knights under heaven but that we shall bee able to greeve them as much as they may us; and we shall gather together those that wee love, and that loveth us, and what yee will have done shall be done; and therefore, sir Launcelot, wee will take the woe with the wealth.' 'Gramercy,' said sir Launcelot, 'of your good comfort; for in my great distresse, my faire nephew, ye comfort me greatly, and much I am beholden unto you. But this, my faire nephew, I would that ye did in all haste that yee may, or it bee forth dayes¹, that yee will looke in their lodgings that beene lodged heere nigh about the king, which will hold with me, and which will not, for now I would faine know which were my friends from my foes.' Then sir Bors called to him sir Lionell, sir Ector de Maris, sir Blamor de Ganis, sir Bleoboris de Ganis, sir Galahantine, sir Galihodine, sir Galihud, sir Menadewke, with sir Villiers the valiaunt, sir Hebes le Renomes, sir Lavaine, sir Urre of Hungary, sir Neroveus, and sir Plenorius, these two sir Launcelot made knights, and the one of them he wanne upon a bridge, and therefore they would never bee against him; and sir Harry le fise de Lake, and sir Selises of the dolorous toure, and sir Melias de Lile, and sir Bellangere le Beuse, which was sir Alisaunder Lorphelins son, because his mother, dame Alis le beale Pilgrim, was of kin unto sir Launcelot, hee held with him. So there came sir Palomides and sir Safire his brother to hold with sir Launcelot, and sir Clegis of Sadocke, and sir Dinas, and sir Clarius of Claremount. So these two and twentie knights drew them together, and anon they were armed and on horsebacke, and promised sir Launcelot to doe what hee would. Then there fell to them what of Northwalis and what of Cornewaile, for sir Lamoracks sake and for sir Tristrams sake, to the number of fourescore good and valiant knights. 'My lords,' said sir Launcelot, 'wit ye wel that I have beene ever sithence I came into this countrey well willing unto my lord king Arthur and unto my lady queene Guenever unto my power; and this night, because my lady the queene sent for mee to speake with her, I was there by a forecast nigh slaine, but, as Jesu provided mee, I escaped all their malice.' And then that noble knight sir Launcelot told them all how he was hard bested in the queenes chamber, and how and in what manner he escaped from them, 'And therefore,' said sir Launcelot, 'wit ye wel, my faire lords, for because I have slaine this night sir Agravaine and at the least twelve of his fellowes, now I am sure of mortall war. These knights were sent and ordained by king Arthur to betray mee, and therefore the king will in his heate and malice judge the queene to the fire, and that may I not suffer, that shee should bee burnt for my sake. For I will

¹ *Forth dayes.*—i. e. till the day be advanced.

fight for the queene, that she is a true lady unto her lord ; but the king in his heat, I dread me, will not take me as I ought to be taken.'

CHAP. CXLV.—*Of the counsaile and advise which was taken by sir Launcelot and his friends for to save the queene.*

'MY lord sir Launcelot,' said sir Bors, 'by mine advise yee shall take the woe with the wealth, and take it patiently, and thanke our Lord God of it ; and sithence it is fallen as it is, I counsaile you to keepe your selfe, for if yee will your selfe, there is no fellowship christned of knights that shall doe you any wrong. Also I will counsaile you, my lord sir Launcelot, that and my lady queene Guenever be in distresse, in so much as she is in paine for your sake, that yee knightly rescue her ; and if yee did otherwise, all the world will speake of you shame to the worlds end, in so much as yee were taken with her. Whether ye did right or wrong, it is now your part to hold with the queene, that shee bee not slaine and put to a mischievous death ; for and the queene die so, the shame shall be yours.' 'I put this to you,' said sir Lancelot, 'that if my lord king Arthur, by evill counsaile, will to morrow in his heate put my lady the queene to the fire, there to be burnt, now I pray you counsaile mee what is best to bee done.' Then they said all at once with one voice, 'Sir, wee thinke that the best that yee may doe is this : that yee knightly rescue the queene ; in so much as shee shall bee burnt, it is for your sake ; and many times yee have rescued the queene from death for other mens quarrels, us seemeth it is more your worship that ye rescue the queene from this peril, in so much as she hath it for your sake.' Then sir Launcelot stood stil, and said, 'My faire lords, wit ye well that I would be loth to doe that thing that should dishonour you or my blood ; and wit yee well I would be right loth that my lady the queene should die a shamefull death. And if so be that I should rescue her, where should I keepe her ?' 'That shall be the least care of us all,' said sir Bors ; 'how did the noble knight sir Tristram, by your good will ? did not he keepe with him La beale Isoud nigh three yeares in Joyous-guard, and that same place is your owne ; and in likewise may ye doe as ye list, and take the queene lightly¹ away, if it bee so that the king will judge her to be burnt ; and in Joyous-gard yee may keepe her long enough, untill the heate of the king be past, and then shall yee bring againe the queene unto the king with great worshippe ; and then peradventure ye shall have thanks for her bringing home againe, where other shall have mauger².' So to mak short tale, they were all consented that

¹ *Lightly*.—Easily.

² *Mauger*.—Ill-will ; for mangré, used as a substantive.

for better or worse, if it were so that the queene were on the morrow brought to the fire, shortly they all would rescue her. And so by the advise of sir Launcelot they put them all to an ambushment in a little wood as nigh Caerleill as they might, and there they abode still for to wit what the king would doe.

CHAP. CXLVI.—*How sir Modred rode hastily unto the king for to tell him of the fray and death of sir Agravaine his brother, and of other things.*

NOW turne wee againe unto sir Mordred, which, when hee was escaped from the noble knight sir Launcelot, he anon gat his horse, and mounted upon him, and rode straight to king Arthur, sore wounded and beaten, and all beebled; and there he told the king al how it was, and how 'they were al slain but me.' 'Jesu, mercy! how may this be?' said the king; 'did yee take him in the queenes chamber?' 'Yee, so God me helpe,' said sir Mordred, 'there we found him unarmed, and there he slew sir Colgrevaunce, and armed him in his armour.' And all this hee told the king, from the beginning to the ending. 'Alas! me sore repenteth,' said the king, 'that ever sir Launcelot should bee against mee; now I am sure the noble fellowship of the round table is broken for ever; and now I may not with my worship but that the queen must suffer death.' So then there was made great ordinance in this heate that the queene must bee judged to death. And the law was such in those dayes, that what soever they were, of what estate or degree, if that they were found guiltie of treason, there should be none other remedie but death: and right so was it ordained for queene Guenever; because sir Mordred was escaped sore wounded, and the death of twelve knights of the round table, these proves and experiences caused king Arthur to command the queene to the fire, there to bee burnt. Then spake sir Gawaine, and said, 'Mylord king Arthur, I would counsaile you not to be over hastie, but that ye would put in respite this judgement of my lady the queene for many causes: one is, though it were so that sir Launcelot were found in the queenes chamber, yet it might be so that he came thither for none evill; for peradventure my lady the queen sent for him to that intent, that sir Launcelot should come to her good grace prively and secretly, weening to her that it was best so to doe, in eschewing and dreading of slaunder; for oftentimes we doe many things that we weene it is for the best, and yet peradventure it turneth to the worst. For I dare say, that my lady your queene is to you both good and true; and as for sir Launcelot, he will make it good upon any knight living that will put upon himselfe any vilanie or shame, and in likewise he will make good for my lady dame Guenever.'

‘That I beleeeve well,’ said king Arthur, ‘but I will¹ not that way with sir Launcelot, for hee trusteth so much upon his hands and his might that he doubteth no man ; and therefore for the queene hee shall never fight more, for shee shall have the law ; and if that I may get sir Launcelot, wit yee well hee shall have a shamefull death.’ ‘Jesu defend,’ said sir Gawaine, ‘that I may never see it.’

CHAP. CXLVII.—*How sir Launcelot and his kinsmen rescued the queene from the fire, and how hee slew many knights.*

THEN said the noble king Arthur to sir Gawaine, ‘My deare nephew, I pray you that ye wil make you ready in your best aray, with your brethren sir Gaheris and sir Gareth, to bring my queene to the fire, there to have her judgement¹, and receive her death.’ ‘Nay, my most noble lord,’ said sir Gawaine, ‘that wil I never doe in my life, for wit you well that my heart will never serve mee to see her dye, and it shall never bee said that ever I was of your counsell of her death.’ Then said king Arthur unto sir Gawaine, ‘Suffer your brother sir Gaheris and sir Gareth to be there.’ Then spake sir Gaheris and the good knight sir Gareth unto king Arthur : ‘Sir, yee may well commande us to be there, but wit yee well it shall be sore against our will ; but and wee bee there by your strait commandement, wee will bee there in peaceable wise, and bear no harneis of warre upon us.’ ‘In the name of God,’ said the king, ‘then make you ready, for shee shall soone have her judgement.’ And then the queene was led foorth without Caerleyll : and so then her ghostly father was brought to her, to be shriven of her misdeeds. Then there was weeping and wailing, and wringing of hands of many lords and ladies ; but there was but few in comparison that would beare any armour for to strength the death of the queen. Then there was one which sir Launcelot had sent unto that place for to espie what time the queene should goe unto her judgement. And anon, as he saw that the queene was shriven, then he gave sir Launcelot warning thereof. Then was there spurring and plucking up of horses ; and right so they came to the fire, and who that stood against them there they were slaine, there might none withstand sir Launcelot. So all that beare armes and withstood them, there were they slaine. And in this rashing and hurling, as sir Launcelot thrangh heere and ther, it mishapned him to sley sir Gaheris and the noble knight sir Gareth, for they were unarmed and unaware ; how bee it in very truth sir Launcelot saw them not, and so were they found dead among the thickest of the presse². Then when sir Launcelot had thus done, and had

¹ *Judgement.*—i. e. execution of her sentence.

² *Presse.*—Crowd.

put them to flight all they that would withstand him, then he rode straight unto queene Guenever, and made a kirtell and a gowne to bee cast upon her, and then hee made her to bee set behind him, and praied her to be of good cheare. Wit you wel that the queene was glad that shee was escaped from death; and then shee thanked God and sir Launcelot. And so hee rode his way with the queene unto Joyous-gard: and many great lords and some kings sent sir Launcelot many good knights; and many noble knights drew unto sir Launcelot.

CHAP. CXLVIII.—*Of the sorrow and lamentation of king Arthur for the death of his two nephewes and other good knights, and also for the queene his wife.*

NOW turne wee againe to king Arthur, that when it was told him how and in what manner of wise the queene was taken away from the fire, and when hee heard of the death of his noble knights, and in speciall of sir Gaheris and sir Gareths death, that he sowned for pure sorow. And when hee was revived, he said, 'Alas! that ever I bare any crowne upon my head, for I have now lost the fairest fellowship of noble knights that ever held christian king together. Alas! my good knights be slaine away from me; now within these two dayes have I lost fortie knights, and also the noble fellowship of sir Launcelot and his blood, for now I may never more hold them together with my worship. Alas! that ever this war began. I charge you that no man tell sir Gawaine of the death of his two bretheren; for when sir Gawaine heareth that sir Gareth his brother is dead, he will nigh go out of his mind. Oh! why slew hee sir Gareth and sir Gaheris? for I dare say as for sir Gareth he loved sir Launcelot above all earthly men.' 'That is truth,' said some knights, 'but they were slaine in the hurling, as sir Launcelot thrang in the thicke of the presse, and wist not whome hee smote, and so unhappely they were slaine.' 'The death of them,' said king Arthur, 'will cause the greatest mortall warre that ever was. I am sure, wist sir Gawaine that sir Gareth were slaine, I should never have rest of him, till that I had destroyed sir Launcelots kinne and him selfe both, or else hee to destroy me; and therefore wit you well my heart was never so heave as it is now; for such a fellowship of good knights shall never bee together in no company. Alas! that ever sir Launcelot and I should bee at debate. Ah! Agravaine, Agravaine,' said the king, 'Jesu forgive it thy soule! for thine evill will that thou and thy brother sir Mordred had unto sir Launcelot hath caused all this sorrow.' Then there came one unto sir Gawaine, and told him how the queene was led away with sir Launcelot, and nigh twentie foure knights slaine. 'Oh! Jesu, defend my

brethren,' said sir Gawaine, 'for full wel wist I^e that sir Launcelot would rescue her, or else hee would die in the field. And so, for to say the truth, he had not beene a man of worship if he had not rescued the queene that day, in so much as she should have been burnt for his sake. But where are my bretheren? I mervaile that I heare not of them.' 'Truely,' said the man, 'your two bretheren, sir Gareth and sir Gaheris, bee slaine.' 'Jesu defend!' said sir Gawaine; 'for all the good in the world I would not that they were slaine, and in especiall sir Gareth.' 'Sir,' said the man, 'hee is slaine, and that is great pittie.' 'Who slew him?' said sir Gawaine. 'Sir,' said the man, 'sir Launcelot slew them both.' 'That may I not beleve,' said sir Gawaine, 'that hee slew my brother sir Gareth; for I dare say my brother sir Gareth loved him better then mee and all his bretheren, and the king both.' 'Sir,' said the man, 'it is noysed that he slew him.'

CHAP. CXLIX.—*How king Arthur at the request of sir Gawaine concluded to make warre against sir Launcelot, and laid siege to his castle called Joyous-gard.*

'**A**LAS!' said sir Gawaine, 'now is all my joy gone.' And right so sir Gawaine ranne unto the king, crying and weeping: 'Oh! king Arthur mine uncle, my good brother sir Gaheris is slaine, and my brother sir Gareth also, the which were two noble knights.' Then the king wept and hee both, and they fell downe in a sowne. And when they were revived againe, sir Gawaine spake and said, 'Sir, I will goe see my brother sir Gareth.' 'Yee may not see him,' said the king, 'for I caused him to bee buried and sir Gaheris both; for I wel understood that ye would make overmuch sorow, and the sight of sir Gareth should have caused your double sorrow.' 'Alas! mine owne lord,' said sir Gawaine, 'who slew my brother sir Gareth? mine owne good lord, I pray you that you will tell me.' 'I wot not how it was,' said the king, 'but as it is said, sir Launcelot slew them both in the thickest of the presse, and knew them not, and therefore let us make a remedy for to revenge their deaths.'

'My most gracious lord and my uncle,' said sir Gawain, 'wit you well that now I shall make you a promise, the which I shall hold by my knighthood, that from this day I shall never faile sir Launcelot, untill the one of us hath slaine the other; and, for the death of my brother sir Gareth, I shall seeke sir Launcelot throughout seven kings realmes, but I shall sley him or else hee shall sley mee.' 'Ye shall not neede to seeke him so farre,' said the king, 'for, as I heard say, sir Launcelot will abide me and you in Joyous-gard, and much people draweth unto him as I heare say.' 'That may I full well beleve,' said

sir Gawaine; 'but, my lord, assay your friends, and I will assay mine.' So then king Arthur sent letters and writs throughout all England, both in the length and in the breadth, for to assemble all his knights. And so unto king Arthur drew many knights, dukes, and earles, so that he had a great hoost. And when they were assembled, the king enformed them all how sir Launcelot had bereft him of his queene. Then came king Arthur and sir Gawaine with an huge hoast, and laid a siege about Joyous-gard, both at the towne and at the castle; and there they made full strong warre on both parties. But in no wise sir Launcelot would not ride out nor goe out of the castle of a long time, neither hee would suffer none of his good knights to issue out, neither none of the towne nor of the castle, untill fifteene weekes were past.

CHAP. CL.—*Of the communication betweene king Arthur and sir Launcelot, and how king Arthur reproved him.*

SO it befell on a day in harvest that sir Launcelot looked over the walls and spake on hie to king Arthur and sir Gawaine: 'My lords both, wit ye well it is in vaine that ye labour at this siege, for heere win yee no worship but dishonour and mauger, for and it list mee come out my selfe and my good knights, I should full soone make an end of this warre.' 'Come forth,' said king Arthur unto sir Launcelot, 'and thou darest, and I promise thee I shall meete thee in the middest of the field.' 'My most noble king,' said sir Launcelot, 'ye may say what yee will, for wit you well that with your selfe I will not strive. And as for my lady queene Guenever, except your person of your highnesse and my lord sir Gawaine, there is no knight under heaven that dare make it good upon mee, that ever I was a traitour unto your person; and at such times, my lord Arthur, as I have saved my lady queene Guenever from the fire, yee loved mee, and thanked me; and then yee promised me for ever to bee my gracious lord, and now me thinketh ye reward me full evill for my good service. And, my good lord, mee seemeth that I had lost a part of my worship in my knight-hood, if I had suffred my lady your queen to have beene brent, in so much as she should have beene brent for my sake. And therefore my good and gracious lord, take your queene unto your good grace, for shee is both faire, true, and good.' 'Fie upon thy proud words,' said sir Gawaine, 'as for my lady the queene, I will never say of her shame. Ah! thou false recreant knight, what cause hadst thou to sleigh my good brother sir Gareth, that loved thee more then all thy kin? Alas! thou madst him knight with thine hands, why slewest thou him that loved thee so well?' 'For to excuse mee,' said sir Launcelot, 'it helpeth mee not. But, by Jesu, and by the faith that I owe

unto the high order of knighthood, I should with as good a will have slaine my nephew sir Bors de Ganis at that time. But alas! that ever I was so unhappy, that I had not seene sir Gareth and sir Gaheris.' 'Thou liest, false recreaunt knight,' said sir Gawaine, 'thou slewest him in despite of me, and therefore wit thou well that I shal make warre unto thee al the while that I may live.' 'Yee say as it pleaseth you,' said sir Launcelot; 'and yet may it never bee said on me and openly proved, that ever I before-cast of reason slew no good knight, as ye, my lord sir Gawaine, have done; and so did I never but in my defence, and that I was driven thereto in saving of my life.' 'Ah! false knight,' said sir Gawaine, 'that thou meanest by sir Lamoracke, but wit thou well that I slew him.' 'Yee slew him not your selfe,' said sir Launcelot, 'for it had beene overmuch for you to have slaine him; for he was one of the best knights christned of his age, and it was great pitie of his death.'

CHAP. CLI.—*How the cosins and kinsmen of sir Launcelot exhorted him for to goe out to do battaile, and how they made them ready.*

THEN said sir Gawaine unto sir Lancelot, 'Sith thou em-
bradest¹, me of sir Lamoracke, wit thou well I shal never leave thee till I have thee at such advantage that thou shalt not escape my hands.' 'I trust you well enough,' said sir Launcelot, 'that if yee may get me I shall have but little mercy.' And then sir Gawaine made many men to blow upon sir Lancelot, and al at once they called him false recreaunt knight. Then when sir Bors de Ganis, sir Ector de Maris, and sir Lionell heard this outcrie, they called unto them sir Palomides, and sir Safire, his brother, and sir Lavaine, with many other mœ of their blood, and all they went unto sir Lancelot, and to him they said thus: 'My lord sir Lancelot, wit yee well that wee have great scorne of the great rebukes that wee heard sir Gawaine say unto you, wherefore wee beseech you and charge you, as ye will have our service, keepe us no longer within these walls; for wit you well we will ride unto the field and doe battaile with them. For sir Gawaine will not suffer you to bee accorded with king Arthur, and therefore fight for your life and your right, and yee dare.' 'Alas!' said sir Lancelot, 'for to ride out of this castle and doe battaile, I am full loth to doe it.' Then sir Launcelot spake on high unto king Arthur and sir Gawaine: 'My lords, I require you and beseech you, sith I am thus required and conjured to ride into the field, that neither you, my lord king Arthur, nor you, sir Gawaine, come not into the field.' 'What shall wee doe then?' said sir

¹ *Embradest*.—Upbraident; reproachest. *Enbraydest*, Caxton.

Gawaine; 'is not this the kings quarrell with thee to fight? and it is my quarrell to fight with thee, sir Launcelot, because of the death of my brother sir Gareth.' 'Then must I needes unto battaile,' said sir Launcelot; 'now wit ye wel, my lord king Arthur and sir Gawaine, yee will repent it when soever I doe battaile with you.' And so then they departed either from other. And on the morrow at underne king Arthur was ready in the field with three great hoosts. And then sir Lancelots fellowship came out at three gates in full good aray, and sir Lionell came in the formost battaile, and sir Launcelot came in the middle battaile, and sir Bors came out at the third gate. And alwaies sir Launcelot charged all his knights in any wise to save king Arthur and sir Gawaine.

CHAP. CLII.—*How sir Gawaine justed and smote downe sir Lionell, and how sir Launcelot horsed king Arthur.*

THEN came forth sir Gawaine from the kinges hoost, and he came before and proffered to just; and sir Lionel was a fiers knight, and lightly he encountred with sir Gawaine, and there sir Gawaine smote sir Lionell throughout the body, that he dashed unto the earth as hee had beene dead. And then sir Ector de Maris and moe other beare him into the castle. Then began a great stowre, and much people was there slaine, and ever sir Launcelot did what he might to save the people on king Arthurs part. And ever king Arthur was nigh about sir Lancelot for to have slaine him, and sir Launcelot suffered him, and would not strike againe. So sir Bors encountred with king Arthur, and there with a speare sir Bors smote him downe to the ground, and so he alighted and drew his sword, and said unto sir Launcelot, 'Shall I make an end of this warre?' And that hee ment for to have slaine king Arthur. 'Not so hardie,' said sir Launcelot, 'upon paine of thy head, that thou touch him no more; for I will see that most noble king that made mee knight neither slaine nor shamed.' And therewithall sir Launcelot alighted from his horse, and tooke up the king and horsed him againe, and said unto him thus:

'My lord Arthur, for Gods love stint this strife, for yee may get heere no worship, and I would do mine uttermost, but ever I forbear you, and yee nor none of yours forbearth mee. My lord, remember what I have done in many places, and now I am evill rewarded.' When king Arthur was againe on horseback, he looked upon sir Lancelot, and then the teares burst out of his eyes thinking on the great curtesie that was in sir Launcelot more then in any other man. And therewith the king rode forth his way, and might no longer behold him, and said to himselfe, 'Alas! that ever this warre began.' And on the morrow, by underne, they made them ready to doe battaile,

and then sir Bors led them forward. So on the morrow came sir Gawaine as grim as any beare¹ with a speare in his hand. And when sir Bors saw him, he thought to revenge his brother sir Lionell of the despite that sir Gawaine had done him the other day. And so they met together so furiously that either beare other through, and so they fell both to the ground. Then sir Launcelot rescued sir Bors, and sent him into the castle; but neither sir Gawaine nor sir Bors died not of their wounds, for they were both holpen. Then sir Lavaine and sir Urre prayed sir Launcelot to doe his paine, and fight as they had done. 'Alas!' said sir Lancelot, 'I have no heart to fight against my lord king Arthur; for alway mee seemeth I doe not as I ought to doe.' 'My lord,' said sir Palomides, 'though ye spare them all this day, they will never con you thanke; and if they may get you at any vantage, yee are but dead.' So then sir Launcelot understood well that they told him truth, and then he strained himselfe more then hee did aforehand, and because that his nephew sir Bors was sore wounded. And then within a little while, by evensong time, sir Launcelot and his partie better stood, for their horses went in blood above their fetlocks, there was so much people slain on both parties. And then for pittie sir Launcelot withdrew his knights, and so did king Arthurs part. And then sir Lancelot and his partie entred into their castle, and either partie buried the dead bodies and put salve to the wounded men.

Of this warre was noised through all Christendome; and at the last it was noysed before the pope; and hee called unto him a noble clarke that at that time was there present, which was the bishop of Rochester. And the pope gave him bulls under lead unto king Arthur of England, charging him, upon paine of interditing of all England, that he take his queene dame Guenever to him againe and accord with sir Launcelot.

CHAP. CLIII.—*How the pope sent downe his bulls for to make peace, and how sir Launcelot brought the queene unto king Arthur.*

SO when this bishop was come to Caerleill, he shewed the king these bulls; and when the king understood the bulls, hee wist not what to doe. But as for to have the queene againe, thereto hee agreed, but in no wise sir Gawaine would not suffer the king to accord with sir Launcelot; but as for the queene hee consented. And then the bishop had of his king his great seale and his assurance, as hee was a true anointed king, that sir Launcelot should come and go safe, and that the queen should not be reproved of the king, nor of none other,

¹ Grim.—Brym as any bore, Caxton. 'As breame (serce) as bore,' was a sort of proverbial phrase.

for nothing done before time past. So when the bishop was come to Joyous-gard, there hee shewed sir Lancelot how the pope had written unto king Arthur and unto him; and there hee told him the perils if hee withheld the queene from the king. And then hee shewed sir Launcelot all his writings, both from the pope and from king Arthur. 'This is sure enough,' said sir Launcelot, 'for full well I dare trust my lords owne writing and his seale, for hee was never yet shamed of his promise; therefore,' said sir Launcelot unto the bishop, 'yee shall ride unto the king before me, and recommend me unto his good grace, and let him have knowledge that this same day eight dayes, by the grace of God, I my selfe shall bring my lady queene Guenever unto him. And ye may say unto my most redoubted lord king Arthur, that I will say largely for my lady the queene, that I shall except none for dread nor feare but the king himselfe and my lord sir Gawaine, and that is more for king Arthurs love then for himselfe.' So the bishop departed and came to the king at Caerleil, and told him all how sir Launcelot had answered him; and then the teares brast out of king Arthurs eyes. Then sir Launcelot purveied him an hundred knights, and all they were clothed in greene velvet, and their horses trapped to the heeles, and every knight held a braunch of olive in his hand in token of peace. And the queen had with her four and twentie gentlewomen folowing her in the same wise. And sir Launcelot had twelve coursers folowing him, and upon every courser sate a young gentleman, and all they were arayed in greene velvet with sarpes¹ of gold about their quarters, and their horses trapped in the same wise downe to the heele with many ouches² set with stones and pearles in gold to the number of a thousand. And queene Guenever and sir Launcelot were clothed in white cloth of gold tissue. And right so as yee have heard, hee roade with the queene from Joyous-gard unto Caerleill. And so sir Launcelot roade throughout Caerleill, and so into the castle, that every man might behold; and wit you well there was many a weeping eye. And then sir Launcelot himselfe alighted and avoided his horse, and tooke the queene and led her where as king Arthur sate in his seate, and sir Gawaine sate before him, and many other great lords. So when sir Launcelot saw the king and sir Gawaine, then hee led the queene by the arme, and then hee kneeled downe and the queene both. Wit you well then was there many a bold knight with king Arthur that wept as tenderly as though they had seene all their kinne before them. So king Arthur sate still, and said not one word. And when sir Launcelot saw his countenance, hee arose and tooke up the queene with³ him, and thus speake hee unto the most noble king Arthur full knightly, and like a man of great honour.

¹ *Sarpes*.—Girdles.

² *Ouches*.—Clasps; fibules.

CHAP. CLIV.—*Of the deliverance of the queene to the king by sir Launcelot, and what language sir Gawaine gave sir Launcelot.*

MY most redoubted lord, ye shall understand that by the popes commandement and yours, I have brought unto you my lady the queene, as right requireth. And if there bee any knight, of whatsoever degree hee bee, except your person, that will say or dare say but that shee is true unto you, I here my selfe, sir Launcelot, will make it good upon his body that she is a true lady unto you. But liers ye have listned unto, and that hath caused great debate betweene you and me; for the time hath beene, my lord king Arthur, that yee have beene greatly pleased with me when I did battaile for my lady your queene. And sith it pleased you at many times that I should fight for her, me seemeth, my good lord, I have more cause to rescue her from the fire, in so much as shee should have beene brent for my sake; for they that told you those tales were liers, and so it fell upon them. For had not the might of God beene with me, I might never have endured against fourteen knights, and they armed and before purposed, and I unarmed and not purposed. For I was sent for unto my lady your queene I wot not for what cause; but I was not so soone within the chamber doore, but anon sir Agravaire and sir Mordred called mee false traitour and recreant knight.' 'They called thee right,' said sir Gawaine. 'My lord sir Gawaine,' said sir Launcelot, 'in their quarrell they proved themselves not in the fight.' 'Wel, wel, sir Launcelot,' said king Arthur, 'I have given thee no cause to doe to mee as thou hast done, for I have worshiped thee and thine more then any of all my knights.' 'My good lord and king,' said sir Launcelot, 'so ye be not displeased, ye shall understand that I and mine have often done better service then any other knights have done you in divers places; and where ye have been full hard bestead I have often rescued you and my lord sir Gawaine and many moe of your knights in divers places. For now I will make my avaunt, and I will that yee all wit that yet I found never no manner of knight but that I was over hard for him and I had done mine uttermost, thanked be God, how be it I have beene matched with good knights, as sir Tristram and sir Lamorake, but ever I had a favour to them and a deeming what they wer. How be it sir Carados of the dolorous toure was a full noble knight and a passing strong man, and that wote ye, my lord sir Gawain; for he might ful wel bee called a noble knight, when he by fine force puled you out of your saddle and bound you overthwart his horse before him to his saddle bow; and there, my lord sir Gawaine, I rescued you, and slew him before your face. And I found his brother sir Torquine in likewise leading sir Gaheris your brother bound before him, and there I rescued your brother,

and slew sir Torquine, and delivered fortie foure¹ of my lord Arthurs knights out of prison. Therefore, my lord sir Gawaine, me seemeth yee ought of right for to remember this, for, and I might have your good will, I would trust to God to have my lord king Arthurs good grace.'

CHAP. CLV. — *Of the communication betwene sir Gawaine and sir Launcelot, with much other language.*

'THE king may doe as hee will,' said sir Gawaine; 'but wit thou well, sir Launcelot, thou and I shall never bee accorded while wee live; for thou hast slaine three of my bretheren, and twaine of them thou slewest traiterously and piteously, for they beare no harneys against thee, nor none would beare.' 'God would they had beene armed,' said sir Launcelot, 'for then had they beene alive. And wit yee well, sir Gawaine, as for sir Gareth, I love none of my kinsmen so much as I did him; and ever while I live, I will bewaile sir Gareths death; and many causes causeth me to bee sorrowfull. I made him knight; and I wote well he loved mee above all earthly knights; and hee was passing noble, true, courteous, and gentill, and well conditioned; and also I wist wel that I should never after have your love, but everlasting warre betwene us. And also I wist well that ye would cause my lord Arthur for ever to be my mortall foe. But thus much I offer you, if it may please the kings good grace and you, my lord sir Gawaine. And first I shall begin at Sandwich, and there I shall goe in my shirt and bare foote, and at every ten miles end I will found a house of religion of what order ye will assigne me, with an hole covent, to sing and to reade day and night in especiall for sir Gareths and sir Gaheris sake; and this shall I performe from Sandwich unto Caerleill, and every house shall have sufficient livelihood; and there is none of all these religious places but they shall be performed, furnished, and garnished in all things as an holy place ought to be, I promise you faithfully.' Then al the knights and ladies that were there wept as they had beene mad; and the teares fell upon king Arthurs cheeks. 'Sir Launcelot,' said sir Gawaine, 'I have well heard thy speech and thy great proffers, but wit thou well, let the king doe as it shall please him, I will never forgive thee my bretherens death, and in especiall the death of my brother sir Gareth. And if mine uncle king Arthur will accord with thee, hee shall loose my service; for wit thou well that thou art both false to the king and to me.' 'Sir,' said sir Launcelot, 'hee beareth not the life that may make that good; and if that yee, sir Gawaine, will charge mee with so high a thing, yee

¹ *Fortie foure.*—*Thre score and foure*, Caxton.

must pardon me, for then needs must I answere you.' 'Nay,' said sir Gawaine, 'wee are past that as at this time, and that caused the pope; but in this land thou shalt not abide past fifteen daies, such warning I give thee. And if that it were not for the popes commandement, I should do battaile with my body against thy body, and prove it unto thee that thou hast beene false unto mine uncle king Arthur and to mee both, and that shall I prove upon thy body when thou art departed from hence, where soever I find thee.'

CHAP. CLVI.—*How sir Launcelot departed from king Arthur and from Joyous-gard for to goe over the sea, and what knights went with him.*

THEN sir Launcelot sighed, and therewith the teares fell on his cheekes, and then hee said these words: 'Alas! most noble christian realme, whom I have loved above all other realmes, and in thee have I gotten a great part of my worship, and now I shall depart in this wise. But fortune is so variable and the wheele so mutable, there is no constant abiding, and that may be proved by many old chronicles of noble Hector, and Troylus, and Alisaunder¹ the mightie conquerour, and many other moe; when they were most in their royaltie, they alighted lowest. And if ye, my most renowned king, will come upon my lands with your nephew sir Gawaine for to warre upon me, I must endure you as well as I may; but as for you, sir Gawaine, if that yee come there, I beseech you and require you charge mee not with treason nor felony, for, and yee doe, I must answere you.' 'Make ye no more adoe,' said sir Gawaine, 'but deliver the queene from thee, and pight thee lightly out of this court.' 'Well,' said sir Launcelot, 'and I had wist of this short answere, I would have advised mee twice or I had come hither; for and the queene had beene so deare to mee as ye noyse her, I durst have kept her from the fellowship of the best knights under heaven.' And then sir Launcelot said unto queene Guenever, in heareing of the king and all the knights: 'Madame, now I must depart from you and this noble fellowship for ever. And sithence it is so, I beseech you, pray for mee, and send me word if ye be noysed with any false tongues, lightly, my lady, let mee have knowledge; and if that any knights hands may deliver you by battaile, I shall deliver you.' And so therewith sir Launcelot kissed the queene. And therewith hee brought

¹ *Hector, Troylus, and Alisaunder.*—The aptness of these examples is not very clear. Hector was slain in the defence of his native country against a foreign invasion; Troilus sought his death in battle, according to the mediæval story, in despair at the infidelity of his love; Alexander the Great, as all know, died of the results of a drunken orgie.

² *Noysed.*—Reported; defamed. Caxton has, *and yf ye be hard bestad by omy false tonges, lightly, my lady, sende me word.*

the queene unto the king, and then sir Launcelot tooke his leave and departed. And there was neither king, duke, nor earle, baron nor knight, lady nor gentlewoman, but that they all wept, as people out of their wits, except sir Gawaine. And so when sir Launcelot came to Joyous-gard, which after hee called the Dolorous-gard, hee called his fellowship unto him, and asked them what they would doe. Then spake many noble knights, as sir Palomides, sir Safire his brother, and sir Bellanger le Beuse, and sir Urre, with sir Lavaine, and with many other: 'Sir, and ye be so disposed for to abide in this countrey, wee will never faile you; and if ye list not to abide in this countrey, there is none of the good knights that be here will faile you, for divers causes. One is this, all we that bee not of your blood shall never bee welcome to the court of king Arthur.' 'My faire lords,' said sir Launcelot, 'I well understand you, and as I can I thanke you, and yee shall understand that I shall depart all my livelihood and all my lands freely among you, and I my selfe will have as little as any of you; for have I sufficient that may long to my person, I will aske none other rich array, and I trust to God to maintaine you on my lands as well as ever were maintained any knights.' Then spake all the knights at once: 'Hee have shame that will leave you; for wee all understand in this realme will bee now no quiet, but ever strife and debate.'

CHAP. CLVII.—*How sir Launcelot passed over the sea into his owne land, and how he made great lords of the knights that went with him.*

'**T**RUELY,' said sir Launcelot, 'I thanke you of your good saying; and well I am sure I knew many rebellions in my dayes which by me were peased. I trow we al shal heare of them in short space, and that me sore repenteth; for ever I dread mee, that sir Mordred will make trouble, for hee is passing envious, and applieth him to trouble.' So they were accorded to goe with sir Launcelot unto his lands. And well an hundred knights departed with sir Launcelot at once, and made their avowes that they would never depart from him for weale nor for woe. And so they shiped at Cardife, and sailed unto Benwicke¹; some men call it Beyon, and some men call it Beaune, whereas the wine of Beaune is; but for to say the truth, sir Launcelot and his nephewes were lords of all the realme of Fraunce, and of all the lands that longed unto Fraunce. Then all the people of those lands came unto sir Launcelot on feete and hands. And so when hee had

¹ *Benwicke*.—See before, book i. p. 70. The attempt in the text to identify this place is curious enough. *Beyon*, in Caxton *Bayen*, is no doubt meant for Bayonne. For *Beaune*, Caxton reads, *Beaume*.

established all these countries, hee shortly called a parliament; and there hee crowned sir Lionell king of Fraunce; and hee made sir Bors to be crowned king of all king Claudas lands; and sir Ector de Maris, which was sir Lancelots youngest brother, he crowned him king of Benwicke, and also king of all Guian¹, which was sir Launcelots owne land; and he made sir Ector prince of them all: and thus he parted his honour. Then sir Lancelot advaunced all his noble knights. And first hee made sir Blamore duke of Limosin in Guian; and sir Bleoberis he made him duke of Poytiers; and sir Galihantine he made him duke of Ouverne²; and sir Galihodin hee made him duke of Sentong; and sir Galihud he made him earle of Perigort; and sir Menadeuke he made him earle of Roerge; and sir Villiers the valiant hee made him earle of Bearne; and sir Hebes le Renomes he made him earle of Comaung; and sir Lavaine hee made him earle of Arminake; and sir Urre he made him earle of Estrake; and sir Neroveus he made him earle of Perdiacke; and sir Plenorius he made him earle of Coife³; and sir Selises of the dolorous toure he made him earle of Masauke; and sir Melias de Lile he made him earle of Tursauk; and sir Bellangere le Beuse hee made him earle of the Laundes; and the good knight sir Palomides he made him duke of the countrie of Provence; and sir Safire hee made him duke of Langedocke; and sir Clegis hee gave him the earledome of Agent; and sir Sadocke hee gave him the earledome of Surlate; and sir Dinas the seneshall hee made him duke of Angeo; and sir Clarus hee made him duke of Normandie. Thus sir Launcelot rewarded his noble knights, and many moe, that mee seemeth it were too long to rehearse.

CHAP. CLVIII.—*How king Arthur and sir Gawaine made a great hoost ready to goe over sea to make warre on sir Launcelot.*

SO leave wee sir Launcelot in his lands, and his noble knights with him, and returne wee againe unto king Arthur and sir Gawaine, that made a great hoast ready, to the number of three-score thousand, and all thinge was ready for their shipping to passe over the sea. And so they shipped at Cardif. And there king Arthur made sir Mordred chiefe ruler of all England; and also hee put queene Guenever under his governaunce. And so king Arthur passed over the sea, and landed upon sir Launcelots land, and there hee burnt and wasted, through the vengeance of sir Gawaine, al that they might overrunne. When these tidings came unto sir Launcelot, that king Arthur and sir Gawaine were landed upon his lands, and that they made great

¹ *Guian*.—Guienne.

² *Ouverne*.—*Querne*, Caxton.

³ *Coife*.—*Foyse*, Caxton. I suppose meant for Foix.

destruction and wast, then speake sir Bors, and said, 'My lord sir Launcelot, it is great shame that wee suffer them thus to ride over our lands; for wit you well, suffer ye them as long as ye will, they will doe you no favour and they may handle you.' Then spake sir Launcelot, which was maister and governour of them all, 'My faire lords, wit you well I am full loth to ride out with my knights for shedding of christen mens blood; and yet, my lords, I understand wee are full bare to susteine any hoast a while, for the mighty warrs that other whiles made king Claudas upon this country upon my father king Ban and mine unckle king Bors; how bee it we will at this time keepe our strong wals, and I shall send a messenger unto my lord king Arthur, desiring him to take a treatise¹; for better is peace then alwayes warre.' So sir Launcelot sent foorth a damoisel and a dwarfe with her, requiring king Arthur to leave his warre upon his lands. And so shee start upon a palfrey, and the dwarfe ranne by her side; and when shee came unto the pavilion of king Arthur, there she alighted, and there met her a gentle knight whose name was sir Lucan the butler, that said, 'Faie damosell, come yee from sir Launcelot du Lake?' 'Yea,' said shee, 'therefore come I hither for to speake with my lord king Arthur.' 'Alas!' said sir Lucan, 'my lord king Arthur would love sir Launcelot, but sir Gawaine will not suffer him.' And then hee said, 'I pray to God, damoisell, yee may speede well, for all wee that are about the king would that sir Launcelot did best of any knight living.' And so with this Lucan led the damosell unto king Arthur, where he sat with sir Gawaine, for to heare what shee would say. And al the lords were right glad to advise the king to bee accorded with sir Launcelot, save all only sir Gawaine, and hee said, 'My lord mine uncke, what will yee do, will ye now turne againe, now yee are past thus farre upon this journey? all the world will speake of you vilany.' 'Nay,' said king Arthur, wite yee well, sir Gawaine, I will doe as yee will advise mee; and yet mee seemeth,' said king Arthur, 'his faire profers were not good to bee refused; but sithence that I am come so far upon this journey, I will that yee give the damosell het answere, for I may not speake to her for pitie.'

CHAP. CLIX.—*What message sir Gawaine sent unto sir Launcelot, and how king Arthur laid siege unto Benwike, and of other matters.*

THEN sir Gawaine said unto the damosell thus: 'Damosell, yee shall say unto sir Lancelot, that it was but idle labour now to send to mine unckle; and say that sir Gawaine sendeth him word that I shall never leave him till he hath slaine me or

¹ *Treatise*.—Treaty.

I him.' So the damosell wept and departed, and there were many weeping eyes. And when sir Lancelot had heard this answer, then the teares ranne downe by his cheeks; and then his noble knights that stood about him said, 'Sir Launcelot, wherfore make yee such cheare? thinke what yee are, and what men we are, and let us noble knights match them in the midst of the field.' 'That may lightly bee done,' said sir Launcelot; 'but I was never so loth to doe battaile, and therfore I pray you, faire sirs, as yee love me, be ruled as I will have you; for I will alwayes flee that noble king that made me knight; and when I may no farther, I must needs defend mee, and that will bee the more worship for me and for every of us, then to compare with the noble king whom wee all have served.' Then they held their language, and as at that night they tooke their rest; and on the morrow, early in the dawning of the day, as the knights looked out, they saw how the citie of Benweke was besieged round about, and fast they began to set up ladders; and then they defied them out of the towne, and beate them mightely from the wals. Then came forth sir Gawaine before the chiefe gate with his speare in his hand, crying on high, 'Sir Launcelot, where art thou? is there not one of you proud knights that dare breake a speare with me?' Then sir Bors made him ready, and came forth out of the towne. And there sir Gawaine encountred with sir Bors; and after with sir Lionell. But sir Gawaine was so fiery, that he smote them both downe, and wounded them passing sore; and then they were rescued, and borne into the towne. And thus sir Gawaine came every day, and failed not but that hee smote downe one knight or other. So thus they endured well halfe a yeare, and much slaughter of people there was on both parties. Then it befell upon a day that sir Gawaine came before the gates armed at all peeces upon a great courser, with a great speare in his hand; and then he cried with a loud voice, 'Where art thou now, thou false traitour sir Launcelot? why doest thou hide thy selfe within hoales and walls like a coward? looke out now, thou false traitour knight, and heere I shall revenge upon thy body the death of my three bretheren.' 'So God mee helpe,' said sir Launcelot, 'I am right heavie of sir Gawaines words, for now he chargeth me with a great charge; and therefore I must defend me, or else to bee a recreaunt knight.' Then sir Launcelot commanded to saddle his strongest horse, and bad fetch his armour, and bring all unto the gate of the toure. And then sir Launcelot spake on high unto king Arthur, and said, 'My lord and noble king which made mee knight, wit you well that I am right heavie for your sake, that ye thus sew¹ upon mee, and allwaies I forbear you; for now

¹ Sew.—Pursue; prosecute.

must I needes defend my selfe, in so much as sir Gawaine hath appealed me of treason, the which is greatly against my will, that ever I should fight against any of your blood; but now I may not forsake it, I am driven thereto as a best to a bay.' Then sir Launcelot and his noble knights came out of the citie by a great number, in so much that when king Arthur saw the number of men and knights, hee mervailed, and said to himselfe, 'Alas! that ever sir Launcelot was against me, for now I see that hee hath forborne me.' And so the covenant was made, there should no man come nigh them, nor deale with them, till that one were dead or yeelden.

CHAP. CLX.—*How sir Gawaine and sir Launcelot did battaile together, and how sir Gawaine was hurt.*

THEN sir Gawaine and sir Launcelot departed a great way in sunder; and then they came together with all their horses might, as fast as they myght runne, and either smote other in the midst of their sheelds. But the knights were so strong that their horses might not endure their buffets; and so they fell to the earth. Then they avoided their horses, and gave many sadde strokes, that the blood braste out of many places. Then had sir Gawaine such a grace and gift, which an holy man had given him, that every day in the yeare from underne till high noone, his might encreased those three houres as much as thyrce his owne strength; and when sir Launcelot felt his might evermore encrease, sir Launcelot had of him great wonder, and dread him sore to be shamed; wherefore sir Launcelot traced and traversed and covered himselfe with his shield, and kept his might and his breath during three houres. And then when it was past noone, sir Gawaine had no more but his owne might. Then when sir Launcelot felt him so come downe, then began he to stretch himselfe up, and stood neere sir Gawaine, and said to him these words, 'My lord sir Gawain, now I feele that yee have done; now, my lord sir Gawaine, I must doe my part, for many great and grievous strookes I have endured you this day with great paine.' Then sir Launcelot began to double his strookes, and gave sir Gawaine such a buffet upon the helmet, that he fell downe on his side, and then sir Launcelot withdrew him from him. 'Why withdrawest thou thy selfe?' said sir Gawaine; 'now turne againe, traitour knight, and slay me; for and thou leave mee thus, when I am whole I shal doe battaile with thee againe.' 'Sir, I shall endure you by the grace of God,' said sir Launcelot; 'but wit you well, sir Gawaine, I will never smite a felled knight.' And so sir Launcelot went into the citie, and sir Gawaine was borne into one of king Arthurs pavilions; and anon there was leaches brought to him, which searched his wound, and salved it with soft oyntments.

CHAP. CLXI.—*Of the sorrow that king Arthur made for the warre, and of another battaile, where also sir Gawaine had the worse.*

'**A**LAS,' said the king, 'that ever this unhappie warre began ! for ever sir Launcelot forbeareth me in all places, and in likewise my kinne, and that is seene this day by my nephew sir Gawaine.' Then king Arthur fell sicke for sorrow of sir Gawaine that was so sore hurt, and because of the warre betweene him and sir Launcelot. Thus sir Gawaine lay sicke about three weekes in his tent, with all manner of leachcraft that might be had. And as soone as sir Gawaine might goe and ride, he armed him at al points and start upon a courser, and gat a speare in his hand. And so he came riding before the chiefe gate of Benwike, and there he cried on high, 'Where art thou, sir Launcelot? come forth, thou traitour knight ! for it mishapned mee the last battaile to be hurt of thy hands; therefore wit thou wel that I am coine this day to make amends. For I wene this day to lay thee as low as thou laidest mee.' 'Jesu defend me,' said sir Launcelot, 'that ever I should bee so far in your danger as yee have beene in mine, for then my dayes were at an end. But, sir Gawaine, sithence that yee so unknighly call mee of treason, yee shall have both your hands full of mee.' And then sir Launcelot armed him at all points, and rode out at the gate. And both the hoasts were assembled, and stood in aray full manly; and both parties were charged for to hold them still to see the battaile of these two noble knights. And then they laid their speares in their rests, and they ranne together as thunder. And sir Gawaine brake his speare upon sir Lancelot in an hundred peeces unto his hand. And sir Launcelot smote him with a greater might, that sir Gawaines horse feete reised, and so the horse and he fell to the earth. Then sir Launcelot avoided his horse, and dressed his shield before him, and so they stood together and gave many sad strookes, that all men on both parties had thereof passing great wonder. But when sir Launcelot felt sir Gawaines might so mervailously encreased, hee then withheld his courage and his wind, and kept himselfe wonderous covert of his might, and under his shield hee trased and traversed here and there for to breake sir Gawaines strookes and his courage. Thus sir Gawaine did great paine unto sir Launcelot three houres continually, that sir Launcelot had great paine to defend himselfe. And after that the three houres were passed, then sir Launcelot felt verily that sir Gawaine was come to his owne proper might and strength, and that his great power was done. And then sir Launcelot stood neere sir Gawaine, and doubled his strookes; and sir Gawaine defended him mightely. But neverthelesse sir Launcelot smote such a strooke upon sir Gawaines helme and upon the old wound, that sir Gawaine

sanke downe upon his one side in a sowne. And anon as hee was awake, hee waved and foyned at sir Launcelot there as he lay, and said: 'Traitor knight! wite thou well that I am not yet slaine; come thou neere and performe this battaile to the uttermost.' 'I will no more doe then I have done,' said sir Launcelot, 'for when I see you on foot, I will doe battaile with you all the while I see you stand on your feete, but for to smite a wounded man that may not stand, God defend me from such a shame.'

Thus as this siege endured, and as sir Gawaine lay sicke neere a moneth, and when hee was well recovered and ready within three daies to doe battaile againe with sir Launcelot, right so came tiding unto king Arthur from England, that made king Arthur and all his hoast to remooove.

CHAP. CLXII.—*How sir Mordred presumed and tooke on him to bee king of England, and would have married the queene.*

AS sir Mordred was ruler of all England, hee caused letters to be made that specified that king Arthur was slaine in battaile with sir Launcelot; wherfore sir Mordred made a parliament, and called the lords together, and there he made them to choose him king. And so hee was crowned at Caunterbury, and held a feast there fifteene daies. And afterward hee drew him to Winchester, and there hee tooke queene Guenever, and said plainly that hee would wed her; and so hee made ready for the feast, and a day prefixt that they should bee wedded. Wherfore queene Guenever was passing heavy; but shee durst not discover her heart, but speake faire and agreed to sir Mordred will. Then she desired of sir Mordred for to goe to London for to bye all maner thing that belonged unto the wedding; and because of her faire speech, sir Mordred trusted her well enough, and gave her leave to goe. And when shee came to London, she toke the toure of London, and sodeinly in all hast possible she stuffed it with all manner of vittaile, and well garnished it with men, and so kept it. Then when sir Mordred wist and understood how he was deceived, he laid a mighty siege about the toure of London; but all might not prevaile sir Mordred. For queene Guenever would never for faire speech nor for foule trust to come in his hands againe. And then came the bishop of Canterbury, the which was a noble clarke and an holy man, and thus he said to sir Mordred: 'Sir, what will yee doe? will yee first displease God, and after shame your selfe and all knighthood? Is not king Arthur your unckle, no further but your mothers brother?' 'Sir, leave this opinion, or else I shall curse you with booke, bell, and candell.' 'Peace, thou false priest!' said sir Mordred, 'for and thou chafe me any more, I shall make thy head to be stricken off.'

So the bishop departed, and did the curse in the most orguloust wise that might be done. And then sir Mordred sought the bishop of Caunterbury for to have slaine him. And when the bishop heard that, he fled, and tooke part of his goods with him, and went nigh unto Glastenbury, and there he was a religious hermit in a chappell, and lived in poverty and in holy praiers. Then sir Mordred sought upon queene Guenever by letters and sonds¹, and by faire meanes and foule, for to have her to come out of the toure of London; but all this availed him not, for shee answered him shortly, openly, and prively, that she had leaver sley her selfe then to be married with him. Then came word to sir Mordred that king Arthur had raised the siege from sir Launcelot, and that hee was comming home ward with a great hoast, for to be avenged upon sir Mordred. Wherefore sir Mordred made to write letters unto all the barrony of this land, and much people drew unto him; for then was the common voice among them, that with king Arthur was none other life but warre and striefe, and with sir Mordred was great joy and blisse. Thus was king Arthur depraved and evill said of, and many there were that king Arthur had made up of naught, and had given them lands, might not say of him then a good word.

CHAP. CLXIII.—*How after that king Arthur had tidings, he returned and came to Dover, where sir Mordred met him to let his landing, and of the death of sir Gawaine.*

AND so, as sir Mordred was at Dover with his hoast, there came king Arthur with a great navy of ships, galies, and caraks². And there was sir Mordred ready waiting to meet the king upon his landing. But king Arthur was so courageous, that there might no manner of knight let him to land, and his knights fiersly followed him, and so they landed maugre sir Mordred and all his power, and put sir Mordred back, that he fled and all his people. So when this battaile was done, king Arthur let bury his people that were dead. And then was the noble knight sir Gawaine found in a great boate lying more then halfe dead. When king Arthur wist that sir Gawaine was laid so low, he went unto him; and there the king made sorrow out of measure, and took sir Gawaine in his armes, and thrice hee sowned. And when hee came to himselfe againe, hee said, 'Alas! my sisters sonne, here now thou liest, the man in the world that I loved most, and now is my joy gone. For now, my nephew sir Gawaine, I will discover me unto your person. In sir Launcelot and you I most had my joy and mine

¹ *Sonds*.—Messages.

² *Caraks*.—Carracks, in the earlier history of mediæval navigation, were small vessels, not the large ones to which the name was applied at a later period.

affiance, and now have I lost my joy of you both, wherefore all mine earthly joy is gone from me.' 'My uncle king Arthur,' said sir Gawaine, 'wit you well that my deathes day is come, and all is through mine owne hastinesse and wilfulnesse, for I am smitten upon the old wound that sir Launcelot du Lake gave me, of the which I feele that I must die; and if sir Launcelot had beene with you as hee was, this unhappie warre had never begun, and of all this I my selfe am causer; for, alas! I would not accord with him; and therefore I pray you, faire uncle, that I may have paper, pen, and inke, that I may write unto sir Launcelot a letter with mine owne hands.' And when paper and inke was brought, sir Gawaine was set up weakely by king Arthur, for hee had beene shriven a little before; and hee wrote thus unto sir Launcelot: 'Floure of all noble knights that ever I heard of or saw in my dayes; I, sir Gawaine, king Lots sonne of Orkeney, sisters sonne unto the noble king Arthur, send unto thee greeting, and let thee have knowledge, that the tenth day of May I was smitten upon the old wound which thou gavest mee before the citie of Benwicke, and through the same wound that thou gavest mee I am come unto my death day, and I will that all the world wit that I sir Gawaine, knight of the round table, sought my death, and not through thy deserving, but it was mine owne seeking; wherefore I beseech thee, sir Launcelot, for to returne againe unto this realme and see my tombe, and pray some prayer more or lesse for my soule. Also, sir Launcelot, for all the love that ever was betweene us, make no taryng, but come over the sea in all the hast that thou maiest with thy noble knights, and rescue that noble king that made thee knight, that is my lord and uncle king Arthur, for hee is full straightly bestood with a false traitour, which is my half brother sir Mordred, and he hath let crowne himselfe king, and he would have wedded my lady queene Guenever, and so had he done, if shee had not put her selfe in the toure of London. And there it misfortuned me for to be stricken upon thy strooke. And at the date of this letter was written but two houres and halfe before my death, written with mine owne hand, and so subscribed with part of my heart blood. And I require thee, as thou art the most famous knight of the world, that thou wilt see my tombe.' And then sir Gawaine wept, and also king Arthur wept; and then they sowned both. And when they awaked both, the king made sir Gawaine to receive his Saviour. And then sir Gawaine prayed the king to send for sir Launcelot, and to cherish him above all other knights. And so at the houre of noone sir Gawaine betooke his soule into the hands of our Lord God. And then the king let bury him in a chappell withiin the castle of Dover¹; and there yet unto this

¹ *Castle of Dover.*—Leland (*Collectanea*, vol. iii. p. 50) tells us that the bones of sir Gawaine were shewn to him when he visited Dover; but they have disappeared

day all men may see the skull of sir Gawaine, and the same wound is seene that sir Launcelot gave him in bataille. Then was it told to king Arthur that sir Mordred had pight a new field upon Barendowne¹. And on the morrow the king rode thither to him, and there was a great bataille betweene them, and much people were slaine on both parts. But at the last king Arthurs partie stood best, and sir Mordred and his partie fled unto Canterbury.

CHAP. CLXIV.—*How after sir Gawaines goast appeared unto king Arthur, and warned him that he should not fight as at that day.*

AND then the king searched all the townes for his knights that were slaine, and made to bury them; and those that were sore wounded he caused them to be salved with soft salves. And then the noble king drew him with his hoast downe unto the sea side westward unto Salisbury; and there was a day assigned betweene king Arthur and sir Mordred, that they should meete upon a downe beside Salisbury and not farre from the sea side. Then sir Mordred raised much people about London, for they of Kent, Southsexe, and Southery², Essex, and Suffolke, and of Norfolke, held the most part with sir Mordred; and many a noble knight drew unto sir Mordred and unto king Arthur; but they that loved sir Launcelot drew unto sir Mordred.

And so upon Trinitie Sunday at night king Arthur fell in a slumbering, not sleeping nor throughly waking. So king Arthur thought that there came sir Gawaine unto him verely, with a number of faire ladies with him; and so when king Arthur saw him, hee said, 'Welcome, my sisters sonne, I wend thou hadst beene dead, and now I see thee alive, much am I beholding unto Almighty Jesu; oh, faire nephew and my sisters sonne, what bee these ladies that bee come hither with you?' 'Sir, said sir Gawaine, 'all these bee the ladies for whom I have fought when I was a man living; and all these are those that I did bataille for in a rightwise quarrell, and God hath given them that grace at their great prayer, because I did bataille for them, that they should bring mee hither to you;

since his time. The chapel alluded to was, no doubt, the very ancient building attached to the Roman pharos in Dover castle. It may be remarked that, according to the narrative of the original romance of the Mort Artus (by Mapes), Gawaine's body was taken to Camelot to be buried by the side of his brother Gaheret. Other versions of the romance state very diversely both the place of Gawaine's death and that of his burial.

¹ *Barendowne*.—*Baramdoun*, Caxton. This is, no doubt, mea near Canterbury; a place well known to antiquaries on account of the Saxon cemetery, the existence of which, doubtless, gave rise to the having been fought there.

² *Southery*.—*Barrey*.

thus much hath God given mee leave for to warne you of your death. For and yee fight as to morrow with sir Mordred, as both yee have assigned, doubt yee not yee must bee slaine, and the most part of your people on both parties. And for the great grace and goodnesse that Almightye Jesu hath unto you, and for pittie of you and many moe other good men that there should bee slaine, God hath sent mee unto you of his most speciall grace for to give you warning, that in no wise yee doe battaile as to morrow, but that yee take a treatise for a monethes day and proffer him largely, so as to morrow to bee put in a delay; for within a moneth shal come sir Launcelot with all his noble knights, and shall rescue you worshipfully, and sleigh sir Mordred and all that ever will hold with him.'

Then sir Gawaine and all the ladies vanished. And anon the king called upon his knights, squires, and yeomen, and charged them lightly to fetch his noble lords and wise bishops unto him. And when they wer come, the king told them his vision, what sir Gawaine told him, and warned him that if he fought on the morrow he should bee slaine. Then the king commanded sir Lucan the butler, and his brother sir Bedevere, and two bishops with them, and charged them in any wise if they might take a treatise for a moneth with sir Mordred, 'and spare not to proffer him lands and goods as much as yee thinke best.' So then they departed, and came to sir Mordred, where hee had a grimly hoast of an hundred thousand men; and there they entreated sir Mordred long time, and at the last sir Mordred was agreed to have Cornewaile and Kent by king Arthurs dayes, and after the dayes of king Arthur to have all England to his obeysance.

CHAP. CLXV.—*How by misadventure of an adder the battaile began, where sir Mordred was slaine and king Arthur wounded to death.*

SO then were they condescended that king Arthur and sir Mordred should 'meete betweene both their hoosts, and everyech of them should bring fourteene persons. And they came with this word unto king Arthur, and then said hee, 'I am glad that this is done.' And so they met as their appointment was, and were agreed and accorded throughly, and wine was fet, and they dranke. Right so came an adder out of a little heath bush, and it stung a knight on the foote; and when the knight felt him stung, he looked downe and saw the adder, and then hee drew his sword to sleigh the adder, and thought of none other harme. And when the hoosts on both parties saw that sword drawn, they blew beumes¹, trumpets, and hornes, and

¹ *Beumes*.—For beames, a sort of trumpets.

showted grimley. And so both hoosts dressed them together, and king Arthur tooke his horse, and said, 'Alas, this unhappy day!' and so roade he to his party. And so sir Mordred did in like wise; and never was there seene a more dolefuller battaile in no christian land: and ever they fought till it was nigh night, and by that time was there an hundred thousand laid dead upon the doune. Then was king Arthur wroth out of measure, when he saw his people so slaine from him. Then the king looked about him, and then was hee warre that of all his hoost, and of al his good knights, were left no moe alive but two knights, that was sir Lucan the butler and sir Bedivere his brother, and they were right sore wounded. Then was king Arthur ware where sir Mordred leaned upon his sword among a great heepe of dead men. 'Now give mee my speare,' said king Arthur to sir Lucan, 'for yonder I have espied the traitour which hath wrought all this woe.' 'Sir, let him be,' said sir Lucan, 'for hee is unhappy; and if yee passe this unhappy day yee shall bee right well revenged upon him. My good lord, remember well your dreame that yee had this night, and what the spirit of sir Gawaine told you this night; yet God of his great goodnesse hath preserved you hitherto, therefore, for Gods sake, my lord, leave off by this, for blessed bee God yee have wonne the field; for heere wee bee three on live, and with sir Mordred is none alive. And if yee leave off now, this wicked day of destine is done.' 'Betide me death, betide me life,' said the king, 'now I see him yonder alone hee shall never escape my hands, for at a better vantage shall I never have him.' Then king Arthur gate his speare in both his hands, and ranne toward sir Mordred, crying, 'Traitor, now is thy death day come!' And when sir Mordred heard king Arthur, hee ran unto him with his sword drawen in his hand, and there king Arthur smote sir Mordred under the shield with a foine of his speare throughout the body more than a fadom. And when sir Mordred felt that hee had his death wound, he thrust himselfe with all the might that hee had up to the end¹ of king Arthurs speare, and right so he smote king Arthur with his sword that hee held in both his hands on the side of the head, that the sword perced the helmet and the brain-pan. And therewith sir Mordred fel downe starke dead to the earth, and the noble king Arthur fell in a sowne to the earth, and there hee sowned oftentimes. And sir Lucan and sir Bedivere oftentimes heaved him up, and so weakly they lad him betweene them both unto a little chappell not farre from the sea side. Then heard they people crie in the field. So sir Lucan departed, and hee was grievously wounded in many places; and so as hee went, hee saw and harkned by the moone light how that pillars

¹ End.—*Bar*, Caxton. The *bar* of the spear was the broad iron ring just below the gripe, which prevented the hand from slipping.

and robbers were come into the field, for to pill and robbe many a noble knight of many a rich jewell. And when sir Lucan understood this worke, hee came unto the king as soone as he might, and told him all that hee had heard and seene. 'Therefore, by mine advise,' said sir Lucan, 'it is best that wee bring you unto some towne.' 'I would it were so,' said the king.

CHAP. CLXVI.—*How king Arthur commaunded to cast his sword Excalibur in the water, and how hee was delivered unto ladies in a barge.*

BUT I may not stand, my head aketh so. Ah, sir Launcelot,' said king Arthur, 'this same day have I sore missed thee. Alas! that ever I was against thee, for now have I my death, wherof sir Gawaine warned me in my dreame.' Then sir Lucan tooke up king Arthur on the one part, and sir Bedivere on the other part, and in the lifting the king sowned. And sir Lucan fel in a sowne with that lift, and therewith the noble knights heart brast. Then sir Bedivere wept for the death of his brother. 'Leave this weeping and mourning,' said king Arthur, 'for all this wil not avail; for wit thou well, and I might live my selfe, the death of sir Lucan would greeve mee evermore. But my time hieth fast,' said king Arthur unto sir Bediver, 'therefore take thou Excalibur my good sword, and goe with it unto yonder water side, and, when thou comest there, I charge thee throw my sword into that water, and come againe and tell me what thou shalt see there.' 'My lord,' said sir Bedivere, 'your commande shall be done, and lightly bring you word againe.' And so sir Bedivere departed; and by the way he beheld that noble sword where the pummell and the haft were all of precious stones, and then hee said to himselfe, 'If I throw this rich sword into the water, thereof shall never come good, but harme and losse.' And then sir Bedivere hid Excalibur under a tree, and as soone as hee might he came againe unto king Arthur, and said hee had beene at the water, and had throwen the sword into the water. 'What sawest thou there?' said the king. 'Sir,' said he, 'I saw nothing but waves and wind.' 'That is untruely said of thee,' said king Arthur, 'therefore goe thou lightly and doe my command, as thou art to mee lefe and deere; spare not, but throw it in.' Then sir Bedivere returned againe, and tooke the sword in his hand; and then him thought it sinne and shame to throw away that noble sword. And so eft¹ hee hid the sword, and returned againe and told to the king that hee had beene at the water and done his command. 'What saw yee there?' said the king.

¹ *Eft*.—i. e. again. The edition of 1634 has changed it to *after*.

'Sir,' said hee, 'I saw nothing but the water wap and waves waune.' 'Ah, traitour untrue!' said king Arthur, 'now hast thou betrayed me two times. Who would have wend that thou that hast beene unto me so selfe and deere, and thou art named a noble knight, and wouldest betray mee for the rich sword? But now goe againe lightly, for thy long tarying putteth me in great jeopardie of my life, for I have taken cold; and but if thou doe as I commaund thee, and if ever I may see thee, I shall sleigh thee with my owne hands, for thou wouldest for my rich sword see me dead.' Then sir Bedivere departed, and went to the sword, and lightly tooke it up, and went to the waters side; and there hee bound the girdell about the hilts, and then hee threw the sword into the water as farre as hee might; and there came an arme and an hand above the water, and met it and caught it, and so shook it thrise and brandished.

And then the hand vanished away with the sword in the water. So sir Bedivere came againe to the king, and told him what he had seene. 'Alas!' said the king, 'helpe me from hence, for I dread me I have taried over long.' Then sir Bedivere took king Arthur upon his backe, and so went with him to the waters side. And when they were at the waters side, even fast by the banke hove a little barge, with many faire ladies in it, and among them all was a queene, and all they had blacke hoods, and they wept and shrieked when they saw king Arthur.

'Now put mee into the barge,' said the king; and so hee did softly; and there received him three queenes with great mourning, and so these three queenes set them downe, and in one of their laps king Arthur laide his head. And then that queene said, 'Ah! deer brother, why have ye taried so long from me? Alas! this wound on your head hath taken over much cold.' And so then they rowed from the land, and sir Bediver beheld al those ladies goe from him; then sir Bedivere cried, 'Ah! my lord Arthur, what shall become of mee now ye goe from me, and leave me here alone among mine enemies?' 'Comfort thy selfe,' said king Arthur, 'and do as well as thou maiest, for in mee is no trust for to trust in; for I wil into the vale of Avilion for to heale me of my grievous wound; and if thou never heere more of mee, pray for my soule.' But evermore the queenes and the ladies wept and shrieked that it was pittie for to heare them. And as soone as sir Bedivere had lost the sight of the barge, hee wept and wailed, and so tooke the forrest; and so he went all the night, and in the morning hee was ware betweene two hills of a chappell and an hermitage.

CHAP. CLXVII.—*How sir Bedivere found king Arthur dead on the morrow in an hermitage, and how he abode there with the hermit.*

THEN was sir Bedivere glad, and thither he went; and when hee came into the chappell, hee saw where lay an hermit groveling upon all foure there fast by a tombe newly graven. When the hermit saw sir Bedivere, hee knew him well, for he was but a little before bishop of Canterbury, that sir Mordred had banished away. 'Sir,' said sir Bedivere, 'what man is there buried that yee pray so fast for?' 'My faire sonne,' said the hermit, 'I wot not verily, but by deeming; but this night at midnight heere came a great number of ladies, which brought this dead corpes, and prayed mee to bury him; and heere they offered an hundred tapers, and gave me an hundred besaunts.' 'Alas!' said sir Bedivere, 'that was my lord king Arthur that heere lyeth buried in this chappell.' Then sir Bedivere sowned, and when hee awoke, hee prayed the hermite that hee might abide with him there still to live with fasting and prayers. 'Yee are welcome to mee,' said the hermite, 'for I know you better then yee weene that I doe; for yee are that bold Bedivere, and the noble duke sir Lucan the butler was your owne brother.'

Then sir Bedivere told the hermite all as yee heard before; so sir Bedivere abode there still with the hermite, which had beene before the bishop of Canterbury. And there sir Bedivere put upon him poore cloathes, and served the hermite full lowly in fasting and in prayers. Thus of king Arthur I finde no more written in my coppie¹ of the certaintie of his death. But thus was hee led away in a barge, wherein were three queenes; that one was king Arthurs sister Morgan le Fay; the other was the queene of Northgalis; and the third was the queene of the wast lands; and there was Nimue the chiefe lady of the lake, which had wedded sir Pelleas the good knight. More of the death of king Arthur could I never find, but that ladies brought him unto the burials, and such one was buried there, that the hermite bare witnesse, that some times was bishop of Canterbury; but yet the hermite knew not of a certaine that it was verely the body of king Arthur. For this tale sir Bedivere, knight of the round table, made it plainly to be written.

CHAP. CLXVIII.—*Of the opinion of some men of the death of king Arthur, and how queene Guenever made her a nunne in Almesbury.*

SOME men yet say in many parts of England that king Arthur is not dead², but had by the will of our Lord Jesu Christ

¹ In my coppie.—In booke that ben auctorysed, Caxton.

² Not dead.—It is hardly necessary to state that it was so prevalent a legend in the Middle Ages that king Arthur was not dead, but that he was living in 'faerie,' and

into another place; and men say that hee will come againe, and hee shall winne the holy crosse. But many men say that there is written upon his tombe this verse: 'Hic jacet Arthurus¹, rex quondam, rex futurus.'

Thus leave wee here sir Bedivere with the hermit, that lived in prayers and fastings and great abstinence. And when queene Guenever understood that her lord king Arthur was slaine, and all the noble knights, sir Mordred and all the remnant, then shee stole away and five ladies with her: and so shee went to Almesbury², and there shee let make her selfe a nunne and ware white cloathes and blacke. And great pennance shee tooke as ever did sinfull lady in this land; and never creature could make her merry, but lived in fastings, prayers, and almes deedes, that all manner of people mervailed how vertuously shee was changed.

CHAP. CLXIX.—How when sir Launcelot heard of the death of king Arthur and of sir Gawaine, he came into England.

WHEN sir Launcelot heard that sir Mordred was crowned king in England, and had made warre against king Arthur, and also had laid siege about the toure of London, because the queene would not wed him; then was sir Launcelot wonderous wroth, and said to his kinsmen: 'Alas! that double traitour sir Mordred, now I repent mee that hee escaped my hands, for much shame hath hee done to my lord king Arthur. Alas! that ever I should live to heare that most noble king that made mee knight, thus to bee overset in his owne realme, and this dolefull letter that my lord sir Gawaine hath sent me before his death, praying mee to see his tombe; wit yee well his dolefull words shall never goe from my heart. For hee was a full noble knight as ever was borne, and in an unhappie houre was I borne, that ever I wretch should have that unhap to sley sir Gawaine, and sir Gaheris the good knight, and mine owne friend sir Gareth that noble knight.'

'Leave your complaints,' said sir Bors, 'and first revenge you of the death of sir Gawaine; and it will bee well done that yee goe to see sir Gawaines tombe; and secondly, that yee revenge my lord king Arthur and queene Guenever.' 'I thanke you,' said sir Launcelot, 'for ever yee will my worship.'

destined to return to the earth and again rule over the Britons, that it became a proverbial phrase for those who indulged in vain hopes.

¹ *Hic jacet Arthurus*.—William of Malmesbury says that the tomb of king Arthur was never found, and that this was the ground of the belief that he was not dead. Matthew Paris and other later chroniclers pretend that the stone coffin containing the body of king Arthur was found at Glastonbury in the year 1191, and they say that it was identified by the inscription, *Hic jacet inclytus Britonum rex Arthurus, in insula Avalonis sepultus*.

² *Almesbury*.—Amesbury in Wiltshire, where there was a well-known and ancient abbey of nuns of the Benedictine order.

Then they made them ready in all the hast that might bee, with ships and gallies, with sir Lancelot and his hoost for to passe into England. And so hee passed over the sea, and arrived at Dover, and there hee landed with seven kings, and their number was hidious to behold. Then sir Launcelot enquired of the men of Dover where king Arthur was become.

Then the people told him how that hee was slaine, with sir Mordred, and an hundred thousand died upon a day, and how the two battailes were fought. 'Alas!' said sir Launcelot, 'this is the heaviest tidings that ever came to mee. Now, faire sirs,' said sir Launcelot, 'I beseech you shew me the tombe of sir Gawaine.'

And then certaine people of the towne brought him to the castle of Dover, and shewed him the tombe of sir Gawaine. Then sir Launcelot kneeled downe, and wept, and prayed full heartely for his soule. And that night hee made a doale¹, and al they that would come had as much flesh and fish, wine and ale, as they might eate and drinke, and every man and woman had twelve pence, come who would. Thus with his owne hands dealed he his money in a mourning gowne; and ever hee wept, and prayed them to pray for the soule of sir Gawaine. And on the morrow all the priests and clarkes that might be gotten in the cuntry were there, and sung masse of Requiem. And there Sir Launcelot offered an hundred pound, and then the seven kings offered fortie pound a peece. And also there was a thousand knights, and each of them offered a pound; and the offering dured from the morning to night. And sir Launcelot lay two nights upon his tombe in prayers and in weeping. Then on the third day sir Launcelot called unto him the kings, dukes, earles, barrons, and knights, and thus hee said: 'My faire lords, I thanke you all of your comming hither into this cuntry with me; but wee come to late, and that shall repent me while I live, but against death there may no man rebell. But sith it is so, I will my selfe ride and seeke my lady queene Guenever; therefore yee all shall abide mee heere, and but if I come againe within fiftene dayes, then take your ships and depart into your countries, for I will doe as I have said to you.'

CHAP. CLXX.—*How sir Launcelot departed for to seeke queene Guenever, and how hee found her at Almesbury.*

THEN came sir Bors de Ganis, and said, 'My lord sir Launcelot, what thinke yee to doe? now to ride in this realme, wit you well, yee shall finde few friends.' 'Bee as it may,' said sir Launcelot, 'keepe you still heere, for I will forth

¹ *Doale*.—A distribution of charity.

on my journey, and neither man nor child shall goe with mee.' So it was no boote to strive, but hee departed and rode westward, and there hee sought seven or eight dayes, and at the last hee came unto a nunry. And then was queene Guenever ware of sir Launcelot as hee walked in the cloyster; and when shee saw him there, shee sowned three times, that all the ladies and gentlewomen had worke enough for to hold the queene up. And when sir Launcelot was brought unto her, then shee said, 'Through this knight and mee all these warres were wrought, and the death of the most noble knights of the world; for through our love that wee have loved together is my most noble lord slaine.'

'Therefore, sir Launcelot, I require thee and beseech thee heartely, for all the love that ever was betweene us two, that thou never looke mee more in the visage. For as well as I have loved thee, sir Launcelot, now mine heart will not once serve mee to see thee; for through thee and mee is the floure of kings and knights destroyed. Therefore, sir Launcelot, goe thou unto thy realme, and there take thee a wife, and live with her in joy and blisse. And I beseech you heartely, pray for mee unto our Lord God, that I may amend my misse living.'

'Now, sweete madame,' said sir Launcelot, 'would yee that I should now returne againe into my countrey, and there to wed a lady? Nay, madame, wit yee well that I will never while I live; for I shall never bee so false to you, of that I have promised, but the same desteny that yee have taken you unto, I will take mee unto, for to please God, and speciall to pray for you. For I take record of God in you have I had mine earthly joy. And if I had found you so disposed now, I had cast mee for to have had you into mine owne realme and countrey.'

CHAP. CLXXI.—*How sir Launcelot came unto the hermitage where the archbishop of Canterbury was, and how hee tooke the habite unto him.*

'BUT sithence I finde you thus disposed, I ensure you faithfully that I will take mee to pennance, and pray while my life lasteth, if I may finde any good hermite, either gray or white, that will receive mee. Wherefore, madame, I pray you kisse mee once and never more.' 'Nay,' said the queene, 'that shall I never doe, but abstaine you from such things.' And so they departed. But there was never so hard a hearted man but hee would have wept to see the sorrow that they made; for there was a lamentation as though they had beene stungen with speares, and many times they sowned, and the ladies beare the queene to her chamber; and sir Launcelot awoke¹, and went and tooke his horse and rode all that day and all that

¹ *Awoke*.—i.e. recovered from his swoon.

night in a forrest weeping. And at the last hee was ware of an hermitage and a chappell that stood betweene two cliffes, and then hee heard a little bell ring to masse; and he that sung the masse was the bishop of Canterbury. Both the bishop and sir Bedivere knew sir Launcelot, and they spake together after masse; but when sir Bedivere had told him his tale all whole, sir Launcelots heart almost brast for sorrow; and sir Launcelot threw abroad his armour, and said, 'Alas! who may trust this world?'

And then hee kneeled downe on his knees, and prayed the bishoppe for to shrive him and assoile him; and then hee besought the bishop that hee might bee his brother. Then the bishoppe said, 'I will gladly.' And then hee put an habite upon sir Lancelot, and there hee served God day and night with prayers and fastings.

Thus the great hoast abode at Dover. And then sir Lionell tooke fifteene lords with him, and rode to London to seeke sir Launcelot; and there sir Lionell was slaine and many of his lords. Then sir Bors de Ganis made the great hoast to goe home againe unto their owne countrey; and sir Bors, and many moe other of sir Launcelots kinne, tooke on them to ride through all England to seeke sir Launcelot.

So sir Bors rode so long till hee came unto the same chappell where sir Launcelot was; and there hee alighted, and heard masse. And when masse was done, the bishoppe, sir Launcelot, and sir Bedivere came unto sir Bors; and when hee saw sir Launcelot in that manner of clothing, then hee prayed the bishop that hee might bee in the same sewte. And so there was an habite put upon him, and there he lived in prayers and fasting. And within halfe a yeare there was come sir Galihud, sir Galihodin, sir Bleoberis, sir Villiers, sir Clarrus, and sir Gahalantine. So these seven noble knights abode there still. And when they saw that sir Launcelot had taken him unto such perfection, they had no list to depart, but tooke such an habite as hee had. Thus they endured in great pennance sixe yeares, and then sir Launcelot tooke the habite of prishood, and twelve monethes hee sung the masse. And there was none of these other knights but that they red in bookes, and helped for to sing masse and ring bells, and did lowly all manner of service; and so their horses went where they would, for they tooke no regard in worldly riches. And thus upon a night there came a vision unto sir Launcelot, and charged him, in remission of all his sinnes, to hast him towards Almesbury, 'and by that time thou come there thou shalt finde queene Guenever dead, and therefore take thy fellowes with thee, and also purvey thee an horse beere, and bring you the corps of her, and bury it by her lord and husband, the noble king Arthur.' So this vision came thrice unto sir Launcelot in one night.

CHAP. CLXXII.—*How sir Launcelot went with his seven fellows to Almesbury, and found queene Guenever dead, whom they brought to Glastinbury,*

THEN sir Launcelot rose up or it was day, and told the hermite thereof. 'It is well done,' said the hermit, 'that ye disobey not this vision.' Then sir Launcelot tooke his seven fellows with him, and on foote they went from Glastinbury, the which is little more then thirtie mile; and thither they came within two dayes, for they weare weake and feeble to goe. And when sir Launcelot was come to Almesbury, within the nunry, queene Guenever died but halfe an houre before; and the ladies told sir Launcelot that queene Guenever had told all, or shee died, that sir Launcelot had beene priest neere twelve moneths. Then sir Launcelot saw her visage, but hee wept not greatly, but sighed; and so hee did all the observance of the service himselfe, both the dirige at night and the masse on the morrow. And there was ordained an horse beere; and so with an hundred torches ever burning about the corps of the queen, sir Launcelot with his seven fellows went on foote from Almesbury untill they came to Glastinbury. And when they were come to the chappell and the hermitage, there shee had a durge¹, with great devotion; and on the morrow the hermite that was sometime bishop of Canterbury sung the masse of requiem with great devotion. And when shee was put into the earth, sir Launcelot sowned, and lay long upon the ground while the hermite came and awaked him, and said, 'Yee are to blame, for yee displease God with such manner of sorrow making.' 'Truly,' said sir Launcelot, 'I trust I doe not displease God, for hee knoweth well mine entent, for my sorrow was not nor is not for any rejoyceing of sinne, but my sorrow may never have an end; for when I remember mee how through my default, and through my presumption and pride, both my noble lord King Arthur and queene Guenever were both laid full low, the which were peerlesse that ever were living of christian people; the remembrance of their kindnesse, and of mine unkindnesse, sanke and emprest so in my heart, that all my naturall strength failed mee, so that I might not sustaine my selfe.'

CHAP. CLXXIII.—*How sir Launcelot began for to waxe sicke, and after died, and then his body was borne unto Joyous-gard, there to bee buried.*

THEN sir Launcelot never after eate but little meste, nor dranke, and then hee sickned more and more, and dried and dwined² away; for the bishop nor none of his fellows

¹ Durge.—A dirige, Caxton.

² Dwined.—Fined; shrunk.

might not make him to eate, and litle hee dranke, that hee was then waxed shorter by a cubit then hee was, that the people could not know him. For ever-more day and night hee prayed, but needfully, as nature required, sometime hee slumbered a broken sleepe, and alwayes hee was lying groveling upon king Arthurs and queene Guenevers tombe; and there was no comfort that the bishop, nor sir Bors, nor none of all his fellowes could make him, it availed nothing.

So within sixe weeks after sir Launcelot fell sicke, and lay in his bed: and then hee sent for the bishoppe that there was hermite, and all his true fellowes. Then sir Launcelot said with dreery steeven¹, 'Sir bishoppe, I pray you that yee will give mee all my rights that belongeth unto a christian man.' 'It shall not neede you,' said the hermite and all his fellowes, 'it is but a heavennesse of your blood, yee shall bee well amended, by the grace of God, to morrow.'

'My faire lords,' said sir Launcelot, 'wit yee well my carefull body will into the earth; I have warning more then I will now say, therefore I pray you give mee my rights.' So when hee was howseled and eneled², and had all that a christian man ought to have, hee prayed the bishop that his fellowes might beare his body unto Joyous-gard.

Some men say Anwick, and some men say it is Bamborow³. 'How be it,' said sir Lancelot, 'me repenteth sore, but I made mine avow somtime that in Joyous-gard I would be buried, and because of breaking of mine avow, I pray you all leade mee thither.' Then there was weeping and wringing of hands among all his fellows. So at the season of night they went all to their beds, for they all lay in one chamber. So after midnight against day, the bishop that was hermite, as hee lay in his bed asleepe, hee fell on a great laughter; and therewith the fellowship awoke, and came unto the bishop, and asked him what hee ayled. 'Ah, Jesu, mercy,' said the bishop, 'why did yee awake mee? I was never in all my life so merry and so well at ease.' 'Why, wherefore?' said sir Bors.

'Truely,' said the bishop, 'heere was sir Launcelot with mee, with more angels then ever I saw men upon one day; and I saw the angels heave up sir Launcelot towards heaven, and the gates of heaven opened against him.' 'It is but dretching of swevens⁴,' said sir Bors: 'for I doubt not sir Launcelot ayleth nothing but good.' 'It may well bee,' said the bishop, 'goe to his bed, and then shall yee prove the sooth.'

¹ *Steeven*.—Sound; i.e. voice.

² *Howseled and eneled*.—Received the sacrament and been anointed with the extreme unction.

³ *Bamborow*.—These conjectures about the site of Joyous-gard are curious enough. I have already remarked that it is commonly supposed to have been intended for Berwick.

⁴ *Dretching of swevens*.—Vexing of dreams.

So when sir Bors and his fellowes came to his bed, they found him starke dead, and hee lay as hee had smiled, and the sweetest savour about him that ever they smelled. Then was there weeping and wringing of hands, and the greatest dole they made that ever made men. And on the morrow the bishop sung his masse of requiem; and after the bishop and all those nine¹ knights put sir Launcelot in the same horse beere that queene Guenever was laid in before that shee was buried.

And so the bishop and they altogether went with the corps of sir Launcelot dayly till they came unto Joyous-gard, and ever they had an hundred torches burning about him.

And so within fifteene dayes they came to Joyous-gard; and there they laid his corps in the body of the quire, and sung and red many psalters and prayers over him and about him; and ever his visage was laid open and naked, that all folke might behold him, for such was the custome in those dayes that all men of worship should so lye with open visage till that they were buried. And right thus as they were at their service, there came sir Ector de Maris, that had sought seven yeare all England, Scotland, and Wales, seeking his brother sir Launcelot.

CHAP. CLXXIV.—*How sir Ector found sir Launcelot his brother dead, and how Constantine reigned next after king Arthur, and of the end of this booke.*

AND when sir Ector de Maris heard such noise and light in the queere of Joyous-gard, hee alighted, and put his horse away from him, and came into the queere; and there hee saw men sing the service full lamentably; and all they knew sir Ector, but hee knew not them. Then went sir Bors unto sir Ector, and told him how there lay his brother sir Launcelot dead.

Then there was weeping and dolour out of measure. Thus they kept sir Launcelots corps above the ground fifteene dayes, and then they buried it with great devotion; and then at leasure they went all with the bishop of Canterbury unto his hermitage, and there they were together more than a moneth. Then sir Constantine, which was sir Cadors son of Cornewaile, was chosen king of England; and hee was a full noble knight, and worshipfully hee ruled this realme. And then this king Constantine sent for the bishop of Canterbury, for hee heard say where hee was, and so hee was restored unto his bishopricke, and left that hermitage; and sir Bedivere was there ever still an hermite unto his lives end. Then sir Bors de Ganis, sir

¹ Nine.—Caxton gives the same number, though it is not clear how the knights had increased from seven.

Ector de Maris, sir Gahalantine, sir Galihud, sir Galihodin, sir Blamor, sir Bleoberis, sir Villiers le Valiaunt, sir Clarrus of Claremont, all these knights drew them to their countries, how bee it king Constantine would have had them with him, but they would not abide in this realme; and there they lived in their countries as holy men.

For sir Bors, sir Ector, sir Blamor, and sir Bleoberis went into the Holy Land, there as Jesu Christ was both quick and dead, anon as they had stablished their lands; for sir Launcelot commanded them so to doe or ever hee passed out of this world. And these foure knights did many battailes upon the miscreaunts and Turkes¹; and there they died upon Good Fryday for Gods sake.

Heere is the end of the whole booke of king Arthur and of his noble knights of the round table, that when they were whole together there was ever an hundred and fortie. Also, heere is the end of the death of king Arthur. I pray you all, gentlemen and gentlewomen, that read this book of king Arthur and his knights from the beginning to the ending, pray for mee while I am alive, that God send mee good deliverance.

And when I am dead, I pray you all pray for my soule. For this booke was finished the ninth yeare of the raigne of king Edward the Fourth, by sir Thomas Maleor², knight, as Jesu helpe mee for his great might, as hee is the servant of Jesu both day and night.

Thus endeth this noble and joyous booke entituled La Mort Darthur, notwithstanding it treateth of the birth, life, and acts of the said king Arthur and of his noble knights of the round table, and their mervailous enquests and adventures, the achieving of the holy sancgreall, and in the end the dolorous death and departing out of this world of them all³.

¹ *Turkes*.—Sir Thomas Malory seems to have forgotten that there were no Turkas in the Holy Land in the fifth and sixth centuries.

² *Maleor*.—*Malcours*, Caxton.

³ The following is the full colophon of Caxton's edition:—'Thus endeth this noble and joyous booke, entytled La Mort Darthur. Notwythstanding it treateth of the byrth, lyf, and actes of the sayd kynge Arthur, and of his noble knyghtes of the rounde table, theyr marveylous enquestes and adventures, thachyevyng of the sang real, and in the ende la Morte Darthur, with the dolorous deth and departyng out of this worlde of them al. Whiche booke was reduced into Englysshe by syr Thomas Malory, knight, as afore is sayd, and by me devyded into xxi. bookes, chaptyred, and emprynted, and fynysshed in thabbey Westmestre the last day of July, the yere of our Lord mccccclxxxv. Caxton me fieri fecit.'

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